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Serial

THE FRIEND:

A SERIES OF ESSAYS

TO AID IN THE FORMATION OF FIXED PRINCIPLES IN
POLITICS, MORALS, AND RELIGION,

WITH

LITERARY AMUSEMENTS INTERSPERSED:

BY SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

=

WITH THE AUTHOR'S LAST CORRECTIONS AND AN APPENDIX, AND WITH
A SYNOPTICAL TABLE OF THE CONTENTS OF THE WORK.

BY HENRY NELSON COLERIDGE, M.A.

IN TWO VOLUMES. 11 1

VOL. I.

A NEW EDITION REVISED.

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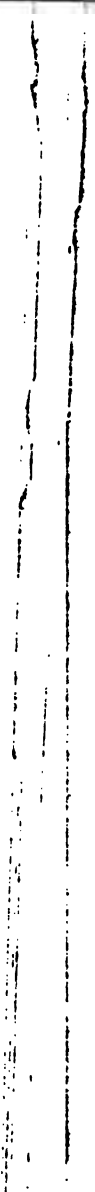
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THE FRIEND.



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*Shapleigh fund
(2 vols.)*

Now for the writing of this werke,
I, who am a lonesome clerke,
Purposed for to write a booke
After the world, that whilome took
Its course in oldē days long passed:
But for men sayn, it is now lassed
In worser plight than it was tho,
I thought me for to touch also
The world which neweth every day—
So as I can, so as I may,
Albeit I sickness have and pain,
And long have had, yet would I faine
Do my mind's best and besiness,
That in some part, so as I guess,
The gentle mind may be advised.

GOWER, *Pro. to the Confess. Amantis.*



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• FRIEND! were an author privileged to name his
judge,—in addition to moral and intellectual com-
petence I should look round for some man, whose know-
ledge and opinions had for the greater part been acquired
experimentally; and the practical habits of whose life
had put him on his guard with respect to all speculative
reasoning, without rendering him insensible to the de-
fectableness of principles more secure than the shifting
ideas and theories generalized from observations merely
empirical, or unconscious in how many departments of
knowledge, and with how large a portion even of pro-
fessional men, such principles are still a *desideratum*. I
would select, too, one who felt kindly, nay, even partially,
toward me; but one whose partiality had its strongest
foundations in hope, and more prospective than retro-
spective would make him quick-sighted in the detection,
and unreserved in the exposure, of the deficiencies and
defects of each present work, in the anticipation of a
more developed future. In you, honoured friend! I have
found all these requisites combined and realized: and
the improvement, which these essays have derived from
your judgment and judicious suggestions, would, of
itself, have justified me in accompanying them with a

• Dedication to the second edition.—Ed.

public acknowledgment of the same. But knowing, as you cannot but know, that I owe in great measure the power of having written at all to your medical skill, and to the characteristic good sense which directed its exertion in my behalf; and whatever I may have written in happier vein to the influence of your society and to the daily proofs of your disinterested attachment;—knowing, too, in how entire a sympathy with your feelings in this respect the partner of your name has blended the affectionate regards of a sister or daughter with almost a mother's watchful and unwearied solitudes alike for my health, interest, and tranquillity;—you will not, I trust, be pained,—you ought not, I am sure, to be surprised—that



TO
MR. AND MRS. GILLMAN,

OF HINGOATE,

These Volumes are Dedicated.

IN TESTIMONY OF HIGH RESPECT AND GRATEFUL AFFECTION.

BY THEIR FRIEND,

S. T. COLERIDGE.

HINGOATE,
October 7, 1818.





NOTICE.

"THE FRIEND," since it was remodelled by the Author, has hitherto appeared in three volumes. It is now offered to the public in two volumes, with a corresponding reduction of price. It has thus become necessary to change the numbering of the Essays, which is now carried on uninterruptedly from first to last. The old numbers are however retained [in the Index] for convenience of reference. The present Editor is indebted to a friend for a careful examination of the text, which has been compared, in all cases of doubt, with a copy in the possession of the Editor revised by the Author's own hand. A few typographical errors of some importance have been corrected, but no other alterations have been made.

The lessons contained in this work will be found, it is believed, not less applicable to the present than to any preceding time.

DERWENT COLERIDGE.

ST. MARK'S COLLEGE, CHELSEA.
October, 1863.

ADVERTISEMENT TO THIRD EDITION.

THE present edition of *THE FRIEND* comprises all the corrections, and most of the notes, found in the author's handwriting in an interleaved copy of the work, bequeathed by him to his daughter-in-law. The Editor has revised the text with as much care as circumstances would permit, and has added a preliminary sketch of the plan and details of the whole, with an appendix, containing several passages, parts of the scattered essays originally published in 1809, and omitted in the recast of the work in 1818, but which seem worthy of separate preservation. It is earnestly hoped that what has thus been done may further the more general acceptance of a work, which, with all its imperfections, is, perhaps, the most vigorous of Mr. Coleridge's compositions ; and which, if it had contained nothing but the essays, in the first volume, on the duty and conditions of communicating truth, and those in the third, on the principles of scientific method, with the reconciliation of the Platonic and Baconian processes of investigation, would still, as the Editor conceives, have constituted one of the most signal benefits conferred in this age on the cause of morals and sound philosophy.

LINCOLN'S INN,

11th September, 1837.

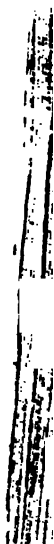
OBJECT AND PLAN OF THE WORK.

THE FRIEND consists of a methodical series of essays, the principal purpose of which is to assist the mind in the formation for itself of sound, and therefore permanent and universal, principles in regard to the investigation, perception, and retention of truth, in what direction soever it may be pursued; but pre-eminently with reference to the three great relations in which we are placed in this world,—as citizens to the state, as men to our neighbours, and as creatures to our Creator,—in other words, to politics, to morals, and to religion. The author does not exhibit any perfect scheme of action or system of belief in any one of these relations; and that he has not done so, nor meant to do so, are points which must be borne in mind by every reader who would understand and fairly appreciate the work. For its scope is to prepare and discipline the student's moral and intellectual being,—not to propound dogmas or theories for his adoption. The book is not the plan of a palace, but a manual of the rules of architecture. It is a *πρωταίεσμα*,—something to set the mind in a state of pure recipiency for the specific truths of philosophy, and to arm its faculties with power to recognise and endure their presence.

In pursuing, however, this main ~~des~~ has examined with more or less minute-
 cular systems and codes of opinion lying in-
 in stating the grounds of his rejection of
 entire or partial admission of others of them,
 effect expressed his own convictions upon several
 most important questions yet disputed in moral
 political philosophy. But it is not so much to any
 conclusion so expressed that the reader's attention
 to be invited, as to the reasoning founded on prin-
 of universal application, by which such conclusion ----
 been evolved;—the primary and prevailing aim through-
 out the work being, as well under the forms of criticism,
 biography, local description, or personal anecdote, as of
 direct moral, political, or metaphysical disquisition, to
 lay down and illustrate certain fundamental distinctions
 and rules of intellectual action, which, if well grounded
 and thoroughly taken up and appropriated, will give to
 every one the power of working out, under any circum-
 stances, the conclusions of truth for himself. The game
 from time to time started and run down may be rich and
 curious; but still at the end of the day it is the chase
 itself, the quickened eye, the lengthened breath, the
 firmer nerve, that must ever be the huntsman's best
 reward.

The Friend is divided into two main sections; the
 first comprising a discussion of the principles of political
 knowledge; the second treating of the grounds of morals
 and religion, and revealing the systematic discipline of

mind requisite for a true understanding of the same. To these is prefixed a general introduction, for the greater part devoted to a statement of the duty of communicating the truth, and of the conditions under which it may be communicated safely; and three several collections of essays, in some degree miscellaneous, and called Landing-Places—interposed in different places for amusement, retrospect, and preparation—complete the work.



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THE FRIEND.

ESSAY I.

*Certe mihi, non est parva fiducia, polliceri opem decertantibus, consilium dubiis, lumen caecis, spem dejectis, refrigerium fessis. Magna quidem haec sunt, si fiant; parva, si promittantur. Verum ego non tum aliis legem ponam, quam legem vobis mea propria mentis exponam; quam qui probaverit, teneat; cui non placuerit, abjiciat. Optarem, fateor, talis esse, qui prodesse possem quam plurimis.—PETRARCH. De vita solitaria.**

Believe me, it requires no little confidence, to promise help to the struggling, counsel to the doubtful, light to the blind, hope to the despondent, refreshment to the weary. These are indeed great things, if they be accomplished; trifles if they exist but in a promise. I, however, aim not so much to prescribe a law for others, as to set forth the law of my own mind; which let the man, who shall have approved of it, abide by; and let him, to whom it shall appear not reasonable, reject it. It is my earnest wish, I confess, to employ my understanding and acquirements in that mode and direction, in which I may be enabled to benefit the largest number possible of my fellow-creatures.

ANTECEDENTLY to all history, and long glimmering through it as a holy tradition, there presents itself to our imagination an indefinite period, dateless as eternity; a state rather than a time. For even the sense of succession is lost in the uniformity of the stream.

It was toward the close of this golden age (the memory of which the self-dissatisfied race of men have everywhere preserved and cherished) when conscience acted in

* Lib. I. tract. iv. c. 4. Some clauses in the original are omitted, and one or two changes of words have been made, by the Author, in this quotation.—Ed.

man with the ease and uniformity of instinct ; when labour was a sweet name for the activity of sane minds in healthful bodies, and all enjoyed in common the bounteous harvest produced, and gathered in, by common effort ; when there existed in the sexes, and in the individuals of each sex, just variety enough to permit and call forth the gentle restlessness and final union of chaste love and individual attachment, each seeking and finding the beloved one by the natural affinity of their beings ; when the dread Sovereign of the universe was known only as the universal parent, no altar but the pure heart, and thanksgiving and grateful love the sole sacrifice.—

In this blest age of dignified innocence one of their honoured elders, whose absence they were beginning to notice, entered with hurrying steps the place of their common assemblage at noon, and instantly attracted the general attention and wonder by the perturbation of his gestures, and by a strange trouble both in his eyes and over his whole countenance. After a short but deep silence, when the first buzz of varied inquiry was becoming audible, the old man moved toward a small eminence, and having ascended it, he thus addressed the hushed and listening company :—

“ In the warmth of the approaching mid-day, as I was reposing in the vast cavern, out of which, from its northern portal, issues the river that winds through our vale, a voice powerful, yet not from its loudness, suddenly hailed me. Guided by my ear I looked toward the supposed place of the sound for some form, from which it had proceeded. I beheld nothing but the glimmering walls of the cavern. Again, as I was turning round, the same voice hailed me : and whithersoever I turned my face, thence did the voice seem to

proceed. I stood still therefore, and in reverence awaited its continuation. 'Sojourner of earth!' (these were its words) 'hasten to the meeting of thy brethren, and the words which thou now hearest, the same do thou repeat unto them. On the thirtieth morn from the morrow's sun-rising, and during the space of thrice three days and thrice three nights, a thick cloud will cover the sky, and a heavy rain fall on the earth. Go ye therefore, ere the thirtieth sun arise, retreat to the cavern of the river and there abide, till the clouds have passed away and the rain be over and gone. For know ye of a certainty that whomever that rain wetteth, on him, yea, on him and on his children's children will fall—the spirit of madness.' Yes! madness was the word of the voice: what this be, I know not! But at the sound of the word trembling came upon me, and a feeling which I would not have had; and I remained even as ye beheld and now behold me."

The old man ended, and retired. Confused murmurs succeeded, and wonder, and doubt. Day followed day, and every day brought with it a diminution of the awe impressed. They could attach no image, no remembered sensations, to the threat. The ominous morn arrived, the prophet had retired to the appointed cavern, and there remained alone during the appointed time. On the tenth morning, he emerged from his place of shelter, and sought his friends and brethren. But alas! how affrightful the change! Instead of the common children of one great family, working towards the same aim by reason, even as the bees in their hives by instinct, he looked and beheld, here a miserable wretch watching over a heap of hard and innutritious small substances, which he had dug out of the earth, at the cost of mangled limbs and exhausted faculties. This he appeared to

worship, at this he gazed, even as the youths of the vale had been accustomed to gaze at their chosen virgins in the first season of their choice. There he saw a former companion speeding on and panting after a butterfly, or a withered leaf whirling onward in the breeze; and another with pale and distorted countenance following close behind, and still stretching forth a dagger to stab his precursor in the back. In another place he observed a whole troop of his fellow-men famished and in fetters, yet led by one of their brethren who had enslaved them, and pressing furiously onwards in the hope of famishing and enslaving another troop moving in an opposite direction. For the first time, the prophet missed his accustomed power of distinguishing between his dreams and his waking perceptions. He stood gazing and motionless, when several of the race gathered around him, and inquired of each other, Who is this man? how strangely he looks! how wild!—a worthless idler! exclaims one: assuredly, a very dangerous madman! cries a second. In short, from words they proceeded to violence: till harassed, endangered, solitary in a world of forms like his own, without sympathy, without object of love, he at length espied in some foss or furrow a quantity of the maddening water still unevaporated, and uttering the last words of reason, IT IS IN VAIN TO BE SANE IN A WORLD OF MADMEN, plunged and rolled himself in the liquid poison, and came out as mad as, and not more wretched than, his neighbours and acquaintances.

The plan of *The Friend* is comprised in the motto of this essay. This tale or allegory seems to me to contain the objections to its practicability in all their strength. Either, says the sceptic, you are the blind offering to lead the blind, or you are talking the language of sight to those who do not possess the sense of seeing. If you mean

to be read, try to entertain and do not pretend to instruct. To such objections it would be amply sufficient, on my system of faith, to answer, that we are not all blind, but all subject to distempers of the mental sight, differing in kind and in degree ; that though all men are in error, they are not all in the same error, nor at the same time ; and that each therefore may possibly heal the other, even as two or more physicians, all diseased in their general health, yet under the immediate action of the disease on different days, may remove or alleviate the complaints of each other. But in respect to the entertainingness of moral writings, if in entertainment be included whatever delights the imagination or affects the generous passions, so far from rejecting such a mean of persuading the human soul, my very system compels me to defend not only the propriety, but the absolute necessity, of adopting it, if we really intend to render our fellow-creatures better or wiser.

But it is with dulness as with obscurity. It may be positive, and the author's fault ; but it may likewise be relative, and if the author has presented his bill of fare at the portal, the reader has himself only to blame. The main question then is, of what class are the persons to be entertained ?—"One of the later school of the Grecians" (says Lord Bacon) "examineth the matter, and is at a stand to think what should be in it that men should love lies, where neither they make for pleasure, as with poets ; nor for advantage, as with the merchant ; but for the lie's sake. But I cannot tell : this same truth is a naked and open day-light, that doth not shew the masques and mummeries and triumphs of the world half so stately and daintily, as candle-lights. Truth may perhaps come to the price of a pearl, that sheweth best by day ; but it will not rise to the price of a diamond or carbuncle, that

sheweth best in varied lights. A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure. Doth any man doubt, that if there were taken from men's minds, vain opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, imaginations as one would, and the like, but it would leave the minds of a number of men, poor shrunken things, full of melancholy and indisposition, and unpleasing to themselves? "•

A melancholy, a too general, but not, I trust, a universal truth!—and even where it does apply, yet in many instances not irremediable. Such at least must have been my persuasion: or the present volumes must have been wittingly written to no purpose. If I believed our nature fettered to all this wretchedness of head and heart by an absolute and innate necessity, at least by a necessity which no human power, no efforts of reason or eloquence, could remove or lessen; I should deem it even presumptuous to aim at other or higher object than that of amusing a small portion of the reading public.

And why not? whispers worldly prudence. To amuse, though only to amuse, our visitors is wisdom as well as good-nature, where it is presumption to attempt their amendment. And truly it would be most convenient to me in respects of no trifling importance, if I could persuade myself to take the advice. Released by these principles from all moral obligation, and ambitious of procuring pastime and self-oblivion for a race, which could have nothing noble to remember, nothing desirable to anticipate, I might aspire even to the praise of the critics and *dilettanti* of the higher circles of society; of some trusty guide of blind fashion; some pleasant analyst of taste, as it exists both in the palate and the

soul ; some living gauge and mete-wand of past and present genius. But alas ! my former studies would still have left a wrong bias ! If instead of perplexing my common sense with the flights of Plato, and of stiffening over the meditations of the imperial Stoic, I had been labouring to imbibe the gay spirit of a Casti, or had employed my erudition, for the benefit of the favoured few, in elucidating the interesting deformities of ancient Greece and India, what might I not have hoped from the suffrage of those, who turn in weariness from the *Paradise Lost*, because compared with the prurient heroes and grotesque monsters of Italian romance, or even with the narrative dialogues of the melodious *Metastasio*, that adventurous song,

Which justifies the ways of God to man,—

has been found a poor substitute for a Grimaldi, a most inapt medicine for an occasional propensity to yawn ! For, as hath been decided, to fill up pleasantly the brief intervals of fashionable pleasures, and above all to charm away the dusky gnome of *ennui*, is the chief and appropriate business of the poet and—the novelist ! This duty unfulfilled, Apollo will have lavished his best gifts in vain ; and Urania henceforth must be content to inspire astronomers alone, and leave the sons of verse to more amusing patronesses. And yet—and yet—but it will be time to be serious, when my visitors have sat down.

ESSAY II.

Sic oportet ad librum, præsertim miscellanei generis, legendum accedere lectorem, ut solet ad convivium contra civilia. Convivator annuitur omnibus satisfacere: et tamen si quid apponitur, quod huius aut illius palato non respondeat, et hic et ille urbane dissimulant, et alia fercula probant, ne quid contrident convivatorem. Quis enim cum contrariam ferat, qui tantum hoc animo veniat ad mensam, ut carpens quæ apponuntur, nec vescatur ipse, nec alios rescii sinat? Et tamen his quoque reperias inciviliores, qui palam, qui sine fine damnant ac lacerant opus, quod nunquam legerint. Ast hoc plusquam sycophanticum est damnare quod nescias.—ERASMUS.

A reader should sit down to a book, especially of the miscellaneous kind, as a well-behaved visitor does to a banquet. The master of the feast exerts himself to satisfy all his guests; but if after all his care and pains there should still be something or other put on the table that does not suit this or that person's taste, they politely pass it over without noticing the circumstance, and commend other dishes, that they may not distress their kind host, or throw any damp on his spirits. For who could tolerate a guest that accepted an invitation to your table with no other purpose but that of finding fault with every thing put before him, neither eating himself, nor suffering others to eat in comfort. And yet you may fall in with a still worse set than even these, with churls that in all companies and without stop or stay, will condemn and pull to pieces a work which they have never read. But this sinks below the baseness of an informer, yea, though he were a false witness to boot! The man, who abuses a thing of which he is utterly ignorant, unites the infamy of both—and in addition to this, makes himself the pander and sycophant of his own and other men's envy and malignity.

THE musician may tune his instrument in private, ere his audience have yet assembled: the architect conceals the foundation of his building beneath the superstructure. But an author's harp must be tuned in the hearing of those, who are to understand its after harmonies; the foundation stones of his edifice must lie open to common

view, or his friends will hesitate to trust themselves beneath the roof.

From periodical literature the general reader deems himself entitled to expect amusement, and some degree of information, and if the writer can convey any instruction at the same time and without demanding any additional thought (as the Irishman, in the hackneyed jest, is said to have passed off a light guinea between two good halfpence), this supererogatory merit will not perhaps be taken amiss. Now amusement in and for itself may be afforded by the gratification either of the curiosity or of the passions. I use the former word as distinguished from the love of knowledge, and the latter in distinction from those emotions which arise in well-ordered minds, from the perception of truth or falsehood, virtue or vice :—emotions, which are always preceded by thought, and linked with improvement. Again, all information pursued without any wish of becoming wiser or better thereby, I class among the gratifications of mere curiosity, whether it be sought for in a light novel or a grave history. We may therefore omit the word information, as included either in amusement or instruction.

The present work is an experiment ; not whether a writer may honestly overlook the one, or successfully omit the other, of the two elements themselves, which serious readers at least persuade themselves that they pursue ; but whether a change might not be hazarded of the usual order, in which periodical writers have in general attempted to convey them. Having myself experienced that no delight either in kind or degree is equal to that which accompanies the distinct perception of a fundamental truth, relative to our moral being ; having, long after the completion of what is ordinarily

called a learned education, discovered a new world of intellectual profit opening on me—not from any new opinions, but lying, as it were, at the roots of those which I had been taught in childhood in my catechism and spelling-book; there arose a soothing hope in my mind that a lesser public might be found, composed of persons susceptible of the same delight, and desirous of attaining it by the same process. I heard a whisper too from within, (I trust that it proceeded from conscience, not vanity,) that a duty was performed in the endeavour to render it as much easier to them, than it had been to me, as could be effected by the united efforts of my understanding and imagination.

Actuated by this impulse, the writer wishes, in the following essays, to convey not instruction merely, but fundamental instruction; not so much to show the reader this or that fact, as to kindle his own torch for him, and leave it to himself to choose the particular objects, which he might wish to examine by its light. The Friend does not indeed exclude from his plan occasional interludes, and vacations of innocent entertainment and promiscuous information, but still in the main he proposes to himself the communication of such delight as rewards the march of truth, rather than to collect the flowers which diversify its track, in order to present them apart from the homely, yet foodful or medicinale, herbs, among which they had grown. To refer men's opinions to their absolute principles, and thence their feelings to the appropriate objects, and in their due degrees; and finally, to apply the principles thus ascertained, to the formation of steadfast convictions concerning the most important questions of politics, morality, and religion—these are to be the objects and the contents of his work.

Themes like these not even the genius of a Plato or a Bacon could render intelligible, without demanding from the reader thought sometimes, and attention generally. By thought I here mean the voluntary production in our own minds of those states of consciousness, to which, as to his fundamental facts, the writer has referred us : while attention has for its object the order and connection of thoughts and images, each of which is in itself already and familiarly known. Thus the elements of geometry require attention only ; but the analysis of our primary faculties, and the investigation of all the absolute grounds of religion and morals, are impossible without energies of thought in addition to the effort of attention. The Friend will not attempt to disguise from his readers that both attention and thought are efforts, and the latter a most difficult and laborious effort ; nor from himself, that to require it often or for any continuance of time, is incompatible with the nature of the present publication, even were it less incongruous than it unfortunately is with the present habits and pursuits of Englishmen. Accordingly I shall be on my guard to make the essays as few as possible, which would require from a well-educated reader any energy of thought and voluntary abstraction.

But attention, I confess, will be requisite throughout, except in the excursive and miscellaneous essays that will be found interposed between each of the three main divisions of the work. On whatever subject the mind feels a lively interest, attention, though always an effort, becomes a delightful effort. I should be quite at ease, could I secure for the whole work as much of it, as a card party of earnest whist-players often expend in a single evening, or a lady in the making-up of a fashionable dress. But where no interest previously exists,

attention (as every schoolmaster knows) can be procured only by terror: which is the true reason why the majority of mankind learn nothing systematically, except as schoolboys or apprentices.

Happy shall I be, from other motives besides those of self-interest, if no fault or deficiency on my part shall prevent the work from furnishing a presumptive proof, that there are still to be found among us a respectable number of readers who are desirous to derive pleasure from the consciousness of being instructed or meliorated: and who feel a sufficient interest as to the foundations of their own opinions in literature, politics, morals, and religion, to afford that degree of attention, without which, however men may deceive themselves, no actual progress ever was or ever can be made in that knowledge, which supplies at once both strength and nourishment.

ESSAY III.

ΑΛΛ' ὥς παρέλαβον τὴν τέχνην παρὰ σοῦ, τὸ πρῶτον μὲν εἶδος
Οἰδοῦσαν ὑπὸ κομπασμάτων, καὶ ῥημάτων ἐπαχθῶν.
'Ισχυρὰ μὲν πρῶτιστον αὐτὴν, καὶ τὸ βάρος ἀφείλον,
'Επυλλίοις καὶ περιπάτοις καὶ τευτλίοις μικροῖς
Χυλὸν διδοὺς στρωμυμάτων, ἀπὸ βιβλίων, ἀπ' ἡθῶν.

ARISTOPH. RANÆ, 939.

IMITATION.*

When I received the Muse from you, I found her puffed and pampered,
With pompous sentences and terms, a cumbrous huge virago.
My first attention was applied to make her look genteelly,
And bring her to a moderate bulk by dint of lighter diet,
I fed her with plain household phrase, and cool familiar salad,
With water-gruel episode, with sentimental jelly,
With moral mince-meat : till at length I brought her within compass.

FRERE.

In the preceding essay I named the present undertaking an experiment. The explanation will be found in the following letter, written to a correspondent during the first attempt, and before the plan was discontinued from an original error in the mode of circulation.

TO ———.

WHEN I first undertook the present publication for the sake and with the avowed object of referring men in all

* This imitation is printed here by permission of the author, from a series of free translations of selected scenes from Aristophanes : a work, of which (should the author be persuaded to make it public) it is my deliberate judgment, that it will form an important epoch in English literature, and open out sources of metrical and rhythmical wealth in the very heart of our language, of which few, if any, among us are aware.

things to principles or fundamental truths, I was well aware of the obstacles which the plan itself would oppose to my success. For in order to the regular attainment of this object, all the driest and least attractive essays must appear in the beginning, and thus subject me to the necessity of demanding effort or soliciting patience in that part of the work, where it was most my interest to secure the confidence of my readers by winning their favour. Though I dared warrant for the pleasantness of the journey on the whole ; though I might promise that the road would, for the far greater part of it, be found plain and easy, that it would pass through countries of various prospect, and that at every stage there would be a change of company ; it still remained a heavy disadvantage, that I had to start at the foot of a high and steep hill : and I foresaw, not without occasional feelings of despondency, that during the slow and laborious ascent it would require no common management to keep my passengers in good humour with the vehicle and its driver. As far as this inconvenience could be palliated by sincerity and previous confession, I have no reason to accuse myself of neglect. In the prospectus* of *The Friend*, which for this cause I reprinted and annexed to the first essay, I felt it my duty to inform such as might be inclined to patronise the publication, that I must submit to be esteemed dull by those who sought chiefly for amusement : and this I hazarded as a general confession, though in my own mind I felt a cheerful confidence that it would apply almost exclusively to the earlier essays. I could not therefore be surprised, however much I may have been depressed, by the frequency with which you hear *The Friend* complained of for its abstruse-

* See Appendix to Vol. III.—Ed.

ness and obscurity ; nor did the highly flattering expressions, with which you accompanied your communication, prevent me from feeling its truth to the whole extent.

An author's pen, like children's legs, improves by exercise. That part of the blame which rests on myself, I am exerting my best faculties to remove. A man long accustomed to silent and solitary meditation, in proportion as he increases the power of thinking in long and connected trains, is apt to lose or lessen the talent of communicating his thoughts with grace and perspicuity. Doubtless too, I have in some measure injured my style, in respect to its facility and popularity, from having almost confined my reading, of late years, to the works of the ancients and those of the elder writers in the modern languages. We insensibly imitate what we habitually admire ; and an aversion to the epigrammatic unconnected periods of the fashionable Anglo-Gallican taste has too often made me willing to forget, that the stately march and difficult evolutions, which characterize the eloquence of Hooker, Bacon, Milton, and Jeremy Taylor, are, notwithstanding their intrinsic excellence, still less suited to a periodical essay. This fault I am now endeavouring to correct ; though I can never so far sacrifice my judgment to the desire of being immediately popular, as to cast my sentences in the French moulds, or affect a style which an ancient critic would have deemed purposely invented for persons troubled with the asthma to read, and for those to comprehend who labour under the more pitiable asthma of a short-witted intellect. It cannot but be injurious to the human mind never to be called into effort : the habit of receiving pleasure without any exertion of thought, by the mere excitement of curiosity and sensibility, may be justly ranked among the worst effects of habitual novel-reading. It is true that these

short and unconnected sentences are easily and instantly understood : but it is equally true, that wanting all the cement of thought as well as of style, all the connections and (if you will forgive so trivial a metaphor) all the hooks-and-eyes of the memory, they are as easily forgotten : or rather, it is scarcely possible that they should be remembered.—Nor is it less true, that those who confine their reading to such books dwarf their own faculties, and finally reduce their understandings to a deplorable imbecility : the fact you mention, and which I shall hereafter make use of, is a fair instance and a striking illustration. Like idle morning visitors, the brisk and breathless periods hurry in and hurry off in quick and profitless succession ; each indeed for the moments of its stay prevents the pain of vacancy, while it indulges the love of sloth ; but all together they leave the mistress of the house (the soul, I mean) flat and exhausted, incapable of attending to her own concerns, and unfitted for the conversation of more rational guests.

I know you will not suspect me of fostering so idle a hope, as that of obtaining acquittal by recrimination ; or think that I am attacking one fault, in order that its opposite may escape notice in the noise and smoke of the battery. On the contrary, I shall do my best, and even make all allowable sacrifices, to render my manner more attractive and my matter more generally interesting. In the establishment of principles and fundamental doctrines, I must of necessity require the attention of my reader to become my fellow-labourer. The primary facts essential to the intelligibility of my principles I can prove to others only as far as I can prevail on them to retire into themselves and make their own minds the objects of their steadfast attention. But, on the other hand, I feel too deeply the importance of the convictions, which first

impelled me to the present undertaking, to leave unattempted any honourable means of recommending them to as wide a circle as possible.

Hitherto I have been employed in laying the foundation of my work. But the proper merit of a foundation is its massiveness and solidity. The conveniences and ornaments, the gilding and stucco work, the sunshine and sunny prospects, will come with the superstructure. Yet I dare not flatter myself, that any endeavours of mine, compatible with the duty I owe to truth and the hope of permanent utility, will render *The Friend* agreeable to the majority of what is called the reading public. I never expected it. How indeed could I, when I was to borrow so little from the influence of passing events, and when I had absolutely excluded from my plan all appeals to personal curiosity and personal interests? Yet even this is not my greatest impediment. No real information can be conveyed, no important errors rectified, no widely injurious prejudices rooted up, without requiring some effort of thought on the part of the reader. But the obstinate (and toward a contemporary writer, the contemptuous) aversion to intellectual effort is the mother evil of all which I had proposed to war against, the queen bee in the hive of our errors and misfortunes, both private and national. To solicit the attention of those, on whom these debilitating causes have acted to their full extent, would be no less absurd than to recommend exercise with the dumb bells, as the only mode of cure, to a patient paralytic in both arms. You well know, that my expectations were more modest as well as more rational. I hoped, that my readers in general would be aware of the impracticability of suiting every essay to every taste in any period of the work; and that they would not attribute wholly to the author, but

THE FRIEND.

to the necessity of his plan, the austerity and of the lighter graces in the first fifteen or twenty In my cheerful moods I sometimes flattered myself, that a few even among those, who foresaw that my rations would at all times require more attention from the nature of their own employments they could afford them, might yet find a pleasure in support. The Friend during its infancy, so as to give it a chance of attracting the notice of others, to whom its style and subjects might be better adapted. But my main anchor was the hope, that when circumstances gradually enabled me to adopt the ordinary means of making the publication generally known, there might be found throughout the kingdom a sufficient number of meditative minds, who, entertaining similar convictions with myself, and gratified by the prospect of seeing them reduced to form and system, would take a warm interest in the work from the very circumstance, that it wanted those allurements of transitory interests, which render particular patronage superfluous, and for the brief season of their blow and fragrance attract the eye of thousands, who would pass unregarded

flowers
Of sober tint, and herbs of med'cinable powers.

In these three introductory essays the Friend has endeavoured to realize his promise of giving an honest bill of fare, both as to the objects and the style of the work. With reference to both I conclude with a prophecy of Simon Grynaeus, from his premonition to the candid reader, prefixed to Ficinus's translation of Plato, published at Leyden, 1557. How far it has been gradually fulfilled in this country since the Revolution in

1688, I leave to my candid and intelligent readers to determine :—

Ac dolet mihi quidem deliciis literarum inescalos subito jam homines adeo esse, præsertim qui Christianos se profitentur, ut legere nisi quod ad presentem gustum facit, sustineant nihil : unde et disciplinæ et philosophiæ ipsa jam fere prorsus etiam a doctis negliguntur. Quod quidem propositum studiorum nisi mature corrigetur, tam magnum rebus incommodum dabit, quam dedit barbaries olim. Pertinax res barbaries est, fateor ; sed minus potest tamen, quam illa persuasa prudentia literarum si ratione caret, sapientiæ virtutisque specie misero lectores circumducens.

*Succedet igitur, ut arbitror, haud ita multo post, pro rusticana sæculi nostri ruditate, caplatrix illa blandiloquentia, robur animi virilis omne, omnem virtutem masculam, profligatura, nisi cavetur.**

In very truth, it grieveth me that men, those especially who profess themselves to be Christians, should be so taken with the sweet baits of literature that they can endure to read nothing but what gives them immediate gratification, no matter how low or sensual it may be. Consequently, the more austere and disciplinary branches of philosophy itself are almost wholly neglected, even by the learned.—A course of study (if such reading, with such a purpose in view, could deserve that name) which, if not corrected in time, will occasion worse consequences than even barbarism did in the times of our forefathers. Barbarism is, I own, a wilful headstrong thing ; but with all its blind obstinacy it has less power of doing harm

* In the original of this passage, the words *gulam* and *mortales* stand respectively for *presentem gustum* and *lectores*.—Ed.

than this self-sufficient, self-satisfied plain good common-sense sort of writing, this prudent saleable popular style of composition, if it be deserted by reason and scientific insight; pitiaibly decoying the minds of men by an imposing shew of amiableness, and practical wisdom, so that the delighted reader knowing nothing knows all about almost everything. There will succeed, therefore, in my opinion, and that too within no long time, to the rudeness and rusticity of our age, that ensnaring meretricious popularness in literature, with all the tricky humilities of the ambitious candidates for the favourable suffrages of the judicious public, which if we do not take good care will break up and scatter before it all robustness and manly vigour of intellect, all masculine fortitude of virtue.

ESSAY IV.

Si modo quæ natura et ratione concessa sint, assumpserimus, presumptionis suspicio a nobis quam longissime abesse debet. Multa antiquitati, nobismet nihil, arrogamus. Nihilne vos? Nihil mehercule, nisi quod omnia omni animo veritati arrogamus et sanctimonie.

ULR. RINOV. De Controversiis.

If we assume only what nature and reason have granted, with no shadow of right can we be suspected of presumption. To antiquity we arrogate many things, to ourselves nothing. Nothing? Aye nothing: unless indeed it be, that with all our strength we arrogate all things to truth and moral purity.

It has been remarked by the celebrated Haller, that we are deaf while we are yawning. The same act of drowsiness that stretches open our mouths, closes our ears. It is much the same in acts of the understanding. A lazy half-attention amounts to a mental yawn. Where then a subject, that demands thought, has been thoughtfully treated, and with an exact and patient derivation from its principles, we must be willing to exert a portion of the same effort, and to think with the author, or the author will have thought in vain for us. It makes little difference for the time being, whether there be an *hiatus oscilans* in the reader's attention, or an *hiatus lacrymabilis* in the author's manuscript. When this occurs during the perusal of a work of known authority and established fame, we honestly lay the fault on our own deficiency, or on the unfitness of our present mood; but when it is a contemporary production, over which we have been nodding, it is far more pleasant to pronounce

it insufferably dull and obscure. Indeed, as charity begins at home, it would be unreasonable to expect that a reader should charge himself with lack of intellect, when the effect may be equally well accounted for by declaring the author unintelligible; or that he should accuse his own inattention, when by half a dozen phrases of abuse, as "heavy stuff, metaphysical jargon, &c.," he can at once excuse his laziness, and gratify his pride, scorn, and envy. To similar impulses we must attribute the praises of a true modern reader, when he meets with a work in the true modern taste: namely, either in skipping, unconnected, short-winded, asthmatic sentences, as easy to be understood as impossible to be remembered, in which the merest common-place acquires a momentary poignancy, a pretty titillating sting, from affected point and wilful antithesis: or else in strutting and rounded periods, in which the emptiest truisms are blown up into illustrious bubbles by help of film and inflation. "Aye!" (quoth the delighted reader) "this is sense, this is genius! this I understand and admire! I have thought the very same a hundred times myself!" In other words, this man has reminded me of my own cleverness, and therefore I admire him. O! for one piece of egotism that presents itself under its own honest bare face of I myself I, there are fifty that steal out in the mask of *tu-isms* and *ille-isms*!

It has ever been my opinion, that an excessive solicitude to avoid the use of our first personal pronoun more often has its source in conscious selfishness than in true self-oblivion. A quiet observer of human follies may often amuse or sadden his thoughts by detecting a perpetual feeling of purest egotism through a long masquerade of disguises, the half of which, had old Proteus been master of as many, would have wearied out the

patience of Menelaus. I say, the patience only : for it would ask more than the simplicity of Polypheme, with his one eye extinguished, to be deceived by so poor a repetition of Nobody. Yet I can with strictest truth assure my readers that with a pleasure combined with a sense of weariness I see the nigh approach of that point of my labours, in which I can convey my opinions and the workings of my heart without reminding the reader obtrusively of myself. But the frequency, with which I have spoken in my own person, recalls my apprehensions to the second danger, which it was my hope to guard against ; the probable charge of arrogance, or presumption, both for daring to dissent from the opinions of great authorities, and, in my following numbers perhaps, from the general opinion concerning the true value of certain authorities deemed great. The word, presumption, I appropriate to the internal feeling, and arrogance to the way and manner of outwardly expressing ourselves.

As no man can rightfully be condemned without reference to some definite law, by the knowledge of which he might have avoided the given fault, it is necessary so to define the constituent qualities and conditions of arrogance, that a reason may be assignable why we pronounce one man guilty and acquit another. For merely to call a person arrogant or most arrogant, can convict no one of the vice except perhaps the accuser. I remember, when a young man who had left his books and a glass of water to join a convivial party, each of whom had nearly finished his second bottle, was pronounced very drunk by the whole party—he looked so strange and pale ! Many a man, who has contrived to hide his ruling passion or predominant defect from himself, will betray the same to dispassionate observers, by his prone-

ness on all occasions to suspect or accuse others of. Now arrogance and presumption, like all other moral qualities, must be shewn by some act or conduct: and this too must be an act that implies, if not an immediate concurrence of the will, yet some faulty constitution of the moral habits. For all criminality supposes its essentials to have been within the power of the agent. Either therefore the facts adduced do of themselves convey the whole proof of the charge, and the question rests on the truth or accuracy with which they have been stated, or they acquire their character from the circumstances. I have looked into a ponderous review of the corpuscular philosophy by a Sicilian Jesuit, in which the acrimonious Father frequently expresses his doubt, whether he should pronounce Boyle or Newton more impious than presumptuous, or more presumptuous than impious. They were both attacked the reigning opinions on most important subjects, opinions sanctioned by the greatest names of antiquity, and by the general suffrage of their learned contemporaries or immediate predecessors. Locke was assailed with a full cry for his presumption in having deserted the philosophical system at that time generally received by the universities of Europe; and of late years Dr. Priestley bestowed the epithets of arrogant and insolent on Reid, Beattie, &c., for presuming to arraign certain opinions of Mr. Locke, himself repaid in kind many of his own countrymen for his theological notions. It will scarcely be affirmed, that these accusations were all of them just, or that any of them were fit and courteous. Must we therefore say, that in order to avoid doubt or disbelief of a popular persuasion without arrogance, it is required that the dissentient should know himself to possess the genius, and foreknow that he should acquire the reputation, of Locke, Newton, Bo

or even of a Reid or Beattie? But as this knowledge and prescience are impossible in the strict sense of the words, and could mean no more than a strong inward conviction, it is manifest that such a rule, if it were universally established, would encourage the presumptuous, and condemn modest and humble minds alone to silence. And as this silence could not acquit the individual's own mind of presumption, unless it were accompanied by conscious acquiescence; modesty itself must become an inert quality, which even in private society never displays its charms more unequivocally than in its mode of reconciling moral deference with intellectual courage, and general diffidence with sincerity in the avowal of the particular conviction.

We must seek then elsewhere for the true marks, by which presumption or arrogance may be detected, and on which the charge may be grounded with little hazard of mistake or injustice. And as I confine my present observations to literature, I deem such *criteria* neither difficult to determine nor to apply. The first mark, as it appears to me, is a frequent bare assertion of opinions not generally received, without condescending to prefix or annex the facts and reasons on which such opinions were formed; especially if this absence of logical courtesy is supplied by contemptuous or abusive treatment of such as happen to doubt of, or oppose, the decisive *ipse dixit*. But to assert, however nakedly, that a passage in a lewd novel, in which the Sacred Writings are denounced as more likely to pollute the young and innocent mind than a romance notorious for its indecency—to assert, I say, that such a passage argues equal impudence and ignorance in its author, at the time of writing and publishing it—this is not arrogance; although to a vast majority of the decent part of our countrymen it would

be superfluous as a truism, if it were exclusively an author's business to convey or revive knowledge, and not sometimes his duty to awaken the indignation of his reader by the expression of his own.

A second species of this unamiable quality, which has been often distinguished by the name of Warburtonian arrogance, betrays itself, not as in the former, by proud or petulant omission of proof or argument, but by the habit of ascribing weakness of intellect, or want of taste and sensibility, or hardness of heart, or corruption of moral principle, to all who deny the truth of the doctrine, or the sufficiency of the evidence, or the fairness of the reasoning adduced in its support. This is indeed not essentially different from the first, but assumes a separate character from its accompaniments : for though both the doctrine and its proofs may have been legitimately supplied by the understanding, yet the bitterness of personal crimination will resolve itself into naked assertion. We are, therefore, authorized by experience, and justified on the principle of self-defence and by the law of fair retaliation, in attributing it to a vicious temper arrogant from irritability, or irritable from arrogance. This learned arrogance admits of many gradations, and is aggravated or palliated, accordingly as the point in dispute has been more or less controverted, as the reasoning bears a smaller or greater proportion to the virulence of the personal detraction, and as the person or parties, who are the objects of it, are more or less respected, more or less worthy of respect.*

* Had the author of the Divine Legation of Moses more skillfully appropriated his coarse eloquence of abuse, his customary assurance of the idiocy, both in head and heart, of all his opponents ; if he had employed those vigorous arguments of his own vehement humour in the defence of truths acknowledged and revered by learned men in general ; or if he had confined them to the names of Chubb, Woolston

Lastly, it must be admitted as a just imputation of presumption when an individual obtrudes on the public eye, with all the high pretensions of originality, opinions and observations, in regard to which he must plead wilful ignorance in order to be acquitted of dishonest plagiarism. On the same seat must the writer be placed, who in a disquisition on any important subject proves, by falsehoods either of omission or of positive error, that he has neglected to possess himself, not only of the information requisite for this particular subject, but even of those acquirements, and that general knowledge, which could alone authorize him to commence a public instructor. This is an office which cannot be procured *gratis*. The industry, necessary for the due exercise of its functions, is its purchase money ; and the absence or insufficiency of the same is so far a species of dishonesty, and implies a presumption in the literal as well as the ordinary sense of the word. He has taken a thing before he had acquired any right or title thereto.

and other precursors of Thomas Payne ; we should perhaps still characterize his mode of controversy by its rude violence, but not so often have heard his name used, even by those who have never read his writings, as a proverbial expression for learned arrogance. But when a novel and doubtful hypothesis of his own formation was the citadel to be defended, and his megalitic hand-granados were thrown with the fury of lawless despotism at the fair reputation of a Sykes and a Lardner, we not only confirm the verdict of his independent contemporaries, but cease to wonder, that arrogance should render men objects of contempt in many, and of aversion in all, instances, when it was capable of hurrying a Christian teacher of equal talents and learning into a slanderous vulgarity, which escapes our disgust only when we see the writer's own reputation the sole victim. But throughout his great work, and the pamphlets in which he supported it, he always seems to write as if he had deemed it a duty of decorum to publish his fancies on the Mosaic Law as the Law itself was delivered, that is, in thunders and lightnings : or as if he had applied to his own book instead of the sacred mount, the menace—*There shall not a hand touch it but he shall surely be stoned or shot through.*

If in addition to this unfitness which every man assesses the means of ascertaining, his aim should unsettle a general belief closely connected with public and private quiet ; and if his language and manner are avowedly calculated for the illiterate, and perhaps for the ignorant part of his countrymen ; disgusting as his presumption must appear, it is yet lost or evanescent in the close neighbourhood of his guilt. That Hobbes' translated Homer into English verse and published a translation, furnishes no positive evidence of his conceit, though it implies a great lack of self-knowledge and of acquaintance with the nature of poetry. A strong wish often imposes itself on the mind for actual power ; the mistake is favoured by the immediate pleasure derived from the exercise of versification, perhaps by the approbation of intimates ; and the candour asks from more impartial readers that sentence, which nature has not enabled him to anticipate. But the philosopher of Malmesbury waged war with Virgil and the fundamental truths of pure geometry, an instance of his gross ignorance and utter misconception of the very elements of the science he proposed to confute, furnished an unanswerable fact in proof of his high presumption ; and the confident and insupportable language of the attack leaves the judicious reader with little doubt of his gross arrogance. An illiterate mechanic, who mistaking some disturbance of his mind for a miraculous call proceeds alone to convert a tribe of savages, whose language he can have no natural means of

* At the time I wrote this essay, and indeed till the present 1818, I had never seen Hobbes' translation of the Odyssey, which, I now find, is by no means to be spoken of contemptuously. It is doubtless as much too ballad-like, as the later versions are epic ; but still, on the whole, it leaves a much truer impression than the original.

of acquiring, may have been misled by impulses very different from those of high self opinion ; but the illiterate perpetrator of the ' Age of Reason ' must have had his very conscience stupified by the habitual intoxication of presumptuous arrogance, and his common-sense overclouded by the vapours from his heart.

As long therefore as I obtrude no unsupported assertions on my readers ; and as long as I state my opinions, and the evidence which induced or compelled me to adopt them, with calmness and that diffidence in myself, which is by no means incompatible with a firm belief in the justness of the opinions themselves ; while I attack no man's private life from any cause, and detract from no man's honours in his public character, from the truth of his doctrines, or the merits of his compositions, without detailing all my reasons and resting the result solely on the arguments adduced ; while I moreover explain fully the motives of duty, which influenced me in resolving to institute such investigation ; while I confine all asperity of censure, and all expressions of contempt, to gross violations of truth, honour, and decency, to the base corrupter and the detected slanderer ; while I write on no subject which I have not studied with my best attention, on no subject which my education and acquirements have incapacitated me from properly understanding ; and above all while I approve myself, alike in praise and in blame, in close reasoning and in impassioned declamation, a steady friend to the two best and surest friends of all men, truth and honesty ; I will not fear an accusation of either presumption or arrogance from the good and the wise. I shall pity it from the weak, and welcome it from the wicked.



ESSAY V.

*In eodem pectore nullum est honestorum turpiumque consortium : et cogitare optima simul ac deterrima non magis est unius animi quam ejusdem hominis bonum esse ac malum. —QUINTILIAN.**

There is no fellowship of honour and baseness in the same breast ; and to combine the best and the worst designs is no more possible in one mind, than it is for the same man to be at the same instant virtuous and vicious.

Cognitio veritatis omnia falsa, si modo proferantur, etiam quæ prius inaudita erant, et dijudicare et subvertere idonea est.

AUGUSTIN.

A knowledge of the truth is equal to the task both of discerning and of confuting all false assertions and erroneous arguments, though never before met with, if only they may freely be brought forward.

I HAVE said, that my very system compels me to make every fair appeal to the feelings, the imagination, and even the fancy. If these are to be withheld from the service of truth, virtue, and happiness, to what purpose were they given ? In whose service are they retained ? I have indeed considered the disproportion of human passions to their ordinary objects among the strongest internal evidence of our future destination, and the attempt to restore them to their rightful claimants, the most imperious duty and the noblest task of genius. The verbal enunciation of this master truth could scarcely be new to me at any period of my life since earliest youth ; but I well remember the particular

time, when the words first became more than words to me, when they incorporated with a living conviction, and took their place among the realities of my being. On some wide common or open heath, peopled with ant-hills, during some one of the gray cloudy days of late autumn, many of my readers may have noticed the effect of a sudden and momentary flash of sunshine on all the countless little animals within his view, aware too that the self-same influence was darted co-instantaneously over all their swarming cities as far as his eye could reach ; may have observed, with what a kindly force the gleam stirs and quickens them all, and will have experienced no unpleasurable shock of feeling in seeing myriads of myriads of living and sentient beings united at the same moment in one gay sensation, one joyous activity ! But awful indeed is the same appearance in a multitude of rational beings, our fellow-men, in whom too the effect is produced not so much by the external occasion as from the active quality of their own thoughts. I had walked from Göttingen in the year 1799, to witness the arrival of the Queen of Prussia, on her visit to the Baron von Hartzberg's seat, five miles from the University. The spacious outer court of the palace was crowded with men and women, a sea of heads, with a number of children rising out of it from their fathers' shoulders. After a buzz of two hours' expectation, the avant courier rode at full speed into the court. At the loud cracks of his long whip and the trampling of his horse's hoofs, the universal shock and thrill of emotion—I have not language to convey it—expressed as it was in such manifold looks, gestures, and attitudes, yet with one and the same feeling in the eyes of all ! Recovering from the first inevitable contagion of sympathy, I involuntarily exclaimed, though in a language to myself alone intelligible, “ O man, ever

nobler than thy circumstances ! Spread but the mist of obscure feeling over any form, and even a woman incapable of blessing or of injuring thee shall be welcomed with an intensity of emotion adequate to the reception of the Redeemer of the world ! ”

To a creature so highly, so fearfully gifted,—who, alienated as he is by a sorcery scarcely less mysterious than the nature on which it is exercised, yet, like the fabled son of Jove in the evil day of his sensual bewitchment, lifts the spindles and distaffs of Omphale with the arm of a giant—to such a creature truth is self-restoration : for that which is the correlative of truth, the existence of absolute life, is the only object which can attract toward it the whole depth and mass of his fluctuating being, and alone therefore can unite calmness with elevation. But it must be truth without alloy and unsophisticated. It is by the agency of indistinct conceptions, as the counterfeits of the ideal and transcendent, that evil and vanity exercise their tyranny on the feelings of man. The powers of darkness are politic if not wise ; but surely nothing can be more irrational in the pretended children of light, than to enlist themselves under the banners of truth, and yet rest their hopes on an alliance with delusion.

As one among the numerous artifices, by which austere truths are to be softened down into palatable falsehoods, and virtue and vice, like the atoms of Epicurus, to receive that insensible *clinamen* which is to make them meet each other half-way, I have an especial dislike to the expression, pious frauds. Piety indeed shrinks from the very phrase, as an attempt to mix poison with the cup of blessing : while the expediency of the measures which the words were intended to recommend or palliate, appears more and more suspicious, as the rank

of our experience widens, and our acquaintance with the records of history becomes more extensive and accurate. One of the most seductive arguments of infidelity grounds itself on the numerous passages in the works of the Christian Fathers, asserting the lawfulness of deceit for a good purpose. For how can we rely on their testimony concerning the supernatural facts? That the Fathers held, almost without exception, that "wholly without breach of duty it is allowed to the teachers and heads of the Christian Church to employ artifices, to intermix falsehoods with truths, and especially to deceive the enemies of the faith, provided only they hereby serve the interests of truth and the advantage of mankind,"* is the unwilling confession of RIBOT. St. Jerome, as is shown by the citations of this learned theologian, boldly attributes this management—*falsitatem dispensaticam*—even to the Apostles themselves. But why speak I of the advantage given to the opponents of Christianity? Alas! to this doctrine chiefly, and to the practices derived from it, we must attribute the utter corruption of the religion itself for so many ages, and even now over so large a portion of the civilized world. By a system of accommodating truth to falsehood, the pastors of the

* *De aconom. Patrum. Integrum omnino doctoribus et cunctis Christiani antistitibus esse, ut dolo verum, falsa veris intermisceant, et supprimis religionis hostes fallant, dummodo veritatis commodis et utilitati inserviant.*—I trust, I need not add, that the imputation of such principles of action to the first inspired propagators of Christianity, is founded on a gross misconception of those passages in the writings of St. Paul, in which the necessity of employing different arguments to men of different capacities and prejudices, is supposed and acceded to. In other words, St. Paul strove to speak intelligibly, willingly sacrificed indifferent things to matters of importance, and acted courteously as a man, in order to win attention as an Apostle. A traveller prefers for daily use the coin of the nation through which he is passing, to bullion or the mintage of his own country: and is this to justify a succeeding traveller in the use of counterfeit coin?

Church gradually changed the life and light of the Gospel into the very superstitions which they were commissioned to disperse, and thus paganized Christianity in order to christen Paganism. At this very hour Europe groans and bleeds in consequence.

So much in proof and exemplification of the probable expediency of pious deception, as suggested by its known and recorded consequences. An honest man, however, possesses a clearer light than that of history. He knows, that by sacrificing the law of his reason to the maxim of pretended prudence, he purchases the sword with the loss of the arm that is to wield it. The duties which we owe to our own moral being, are the ground and condition of all other duties; and to set our nature at strife with itself for a good purpose, implies the same sort of prudence, as a priest of Diana would have manifested, who should have proposed to dig up the celebrated charcoal foundations of the mighty temple of Ephesus, in order to furnish fuel for the burnt offerings on its altars. Truth, virtue, and happiness, may be distinguished from each other, but cannot be divided. They subsist by a mutual co-inherence, which gives a shadow of divinity even to our human nature. *Will ye speak wickedly for God; and talk deceitfully for him?** is a searching question, which most affectingly represents the grief and impatience of an uncorrupted mind at perceiving a good cause defended by ill means: and assuredly if any temptation can provoke a well regulated temper to intolerance, it is the shameless assertion, that truth and falsehood are indifferent in their own natures; that the former is as often injurious (and therefore criminal) as the latter, and the latter on many occasions as beneficial (and consequently meritorious) as the former.

* Job xiii. 7.—Ed.

I feel it incumbent on me, therefore, to place immediately before my readers in the fullest and clearest light, the whole question of moral obligation respecting the communication of truth, its extent and conditions. I would fain obviate all apprehensions either of my inattention on the one hand, or of any insincere reserve on the other, by proving that the more strictly we adhere to the letter of the moral law in this respect, the more completely shall we reconcile that law with prudence ; thus securing a purity in the principle without mischief from the practice. I would not, I could not dare, address my countrymen as a friend, if I might not justify the assumption of that sacred title by more than mere veracity, by open-heartedness. Pleasure, most often delusive, may be born of delusion. Pleasure, herself a sorceress, may pitch her tents on enchanted ground. But happiness (or, to use a far more accurate as well as more comprehensive term, solid well-being) can be built on virtue alone, and must of necessity have truth for its foundation. Add, too, the known fact that the meanest of men feels himself insulted by an unsuccessful attempt to deceive him ; and hates and despises the man who has attempted it. What place then is left in the heart for virtue to build on, if in any case we may dare practise on others what we should feel as a cruel and contemptuous wrong in our own persons ? Every parent possesses the opportunity of observing how deeply children resent the injury of a delusion ; and if men laugh at the falsehoods that were imposed on themselves during their childhood, it is because they are not good and wise enough to contemplate the past in the present, and so to produce by a virtuous and thoughtful sensibility that continuity in their self-consciousness, which nature has made the law of their animal life. Ingratitude, sensuality, and hard-

ness of heart, all flow from this source. Men are ungrateful to others only when they have ceased to look back on their former selves with joy and tenderness. They exist in fragments. Annihilated as to the past, they are dead to the future, or seek for the proofs of it everywhere, only not (where alone they can be found) in themselves. A contemporary poet has expressed and illustrated this sentiment with equal fineness of thought and tenderness of feeling :—

My heart leaps up when I behold
A rainbow in the sky !
So was it, when my life began ;
So is it now I am a man ;
So let it be, when I grow old,
Or let me die.
The child is father of the man,
And I would wish my days to be
Bound each to each by natural piety.*

WORDSWORTH.

*And much
banded*

Alas ! the pernicious influence of this lax morality extends from the nursery and the school to the cabinet and senate. It is a common weakness with men in power,

* I am informed, that these very lines have been cited, as a specimen of despicable puerility. So much the worse for the citer. Not willingly in his presence would I behold the sun setting behind our mountains, or listen to a tale of distress or virtue ; I should be ashamed of the quiet tear on my own cheek. But let the dead bury the dead ! The poet sang for the living. Of what value indeed, to a sane mind, are the likings or dislikings of one man, grounded on the mere assertions of another ? Opinions formed from opinions — what are they, but clouds sailing under clouds, which impress shadows upon shadows ?

*Pungum pelle procul, jubeo ; nam quid mihi fungo ?
Conveniunt stomacho non minus ista suo.*

I was always pleased with the motto placed under the figure of the rosemary in old herbals :—

Apaga, sus ! Haud tibi spiro.

who have used dissimulation successfully, to form a passion for the use of it, dupes to the love of duping ! A pride is flattered by these lies. He who fancies that he must be perpetually stooping down to the prejudices of his fellow-creatures, is perpetually reminding and reassuring himself of his own vast superiority to them. But no real greatness can long co-exist with deceit. The whole faculties of man must be exerted in order to noble energies ; and he who is not earnestly sincere, lives in but half his being, self-mutilated, self-paralyzed.

The latter part of the proposition, which has drawn me into this discussion, that, I mean, in which the morality of intentional falsehood is asserted, may safely be trusted to the reader's own moral sense. Is it a groundless apprehension, that the patrons and admirers of such publications may receive the punishment of their indiscretion in the conduct of their sons and daughters ? The suspicion of Methodism must be expected by every man of rank and fortune, who carries his examination respecting the books which are to lie on his breakfast-table, farther than to their freedom from gross verbal indecencies, and broad avowals of Atheism in the title-page. For the existence of an intelligent First Cause may be ridiculed in the notes of one poem, or placed doubtfully as one of two or three possible hypotheses, in the very opening of another poem, and both be considered as works of safe promiscuous reading *virginibus puerisque* : and this, too, by many a father of a family, who would hold himself highly culpable in permitting his child to form habits of familiar acquaintance with a person of loose habits, and think it even criminal to receive into his house a private tutor without a previous inquiry concerning his opinions and principles, as well as his manners and outward conduct. How little I am an

enemy to free inquiry of the boldest kind, and in which the authors have differed the most widely from my own convictions and the general faith, provided only the inquiry be conducted with that seriousness, which naturally accompanies the love of truth, and be evidently intended for the perusal of those only, who may be presumed capable of weighing the arguments,—I shall have abundant occasion of proving in the course of this work. *Quin ipsa philosophia talibus et disputationibus non nisi beneficium recipit. Nam si vera proponit homo ingeniosus veritalisque amans, nova ad eam accessio fiet: sin falsa, refutatione eorum priores tanto magis stabilientur.**

The assertion, that truth is often no less dangerous than falsehood, sounds less offensively at the first hearing, only because it hides its deformity in an equivocation, or double meaning of the word truth. What may be rightly affirmed of truth, used as synonymous with verbal accuracy, is transferred to it in its higher sense of veracity. By verbal truth we mean no more than the correspondence of a given fact to given words. In moral truth, we involve likewise the intention of the speaker, that his words should correspond to his thoughts in the

* GALILEI *Syst. Cosm.* p. 42.—Moreover, philosophy itself cannot but derive benefit from such discussions. For if a man of genius and a lover of truth brings just positions before the public, there is a fresh accession to the stock of philosophic insight; but if erroneous positions, the former truths will by their confutation be established so much the more firmly.

The original is in the following words :—

La filosofia medesima non può se non ricaver beneficio dalle nostre dispute; perchè se i nostri pensieri saranno veri, nuovi acquisti si saranno fatti; se falsi, col ributtargli, maggiormente verranno confermate le prime dottrine.—Dial. I. 44. Padov. 1774.—Ed.

sense in which he expects them to be understood by others : and in this latter import we are always supposed to use the word, whenever we speak of truth absolutely, or as a possible subject of moral merit or demerit. It is verbally true, that in the sacred Scriptures it is written : *As is the good, so is the sinner, and he that sweareth as he that feareth an oath. A man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry. There is one event unto all : the living know they shall die, but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward.** But he who should repeat these words, with this assurance, to an ignorant man in the hour of his temptation, lingering at the door of the alehouse, or hesitating as to the testimony required of him in the court of justice, would, spite of this verbal truth, be a liar, and the murderer of his brother's conscience. Veracity, therefore, not mere accuracy ; to convey truth, not merely to say it, is the point of duty in dispute : and the only difficulty in the mind of an honest man arises from the doubt, whether more than veracity, that is, the truth and nothing but the truth—is not demanded of him by the law of conscience ; whether it does not exact simplicity ; that is, the truth only, and the whole truth. If we can solve this difficulty, if we can determine the conditions under which the law of universal reason commands the communication of the truth independently of consequences, we shall then be enabled to judge whether there is any such probability of evil consequences from such communication, as can justify the assertion of its occasional criminality, as can perplex us in the conception, or disturb us in the performance, of our duty.

The conscience, or effective reason, commands the

* Eccles. viii. 15 ; ix. 2, 5.—Ed.

design of conveying an adequate notion of the thing spoken of, when this is practicable : but at all events a right notion, or none at all. A schoolmaster is under the necessity of teaching a certain rule in simple arithmetic empirically,—(do so and so, and the sum will always prove true) ;—the necessary truth of the rule—that is, that the rule having been adhered to, the sum must always prove true—requiring a knowledge of the higher mathematics for its demonstration. He, however, conveys a right notion, though he cannot convey the adequate one.

ESSAY VI.

Πολυμαθὴ κάρτα μὲν ὠφελείη, κάρτα δὲ βλάπτει τὸν ἔχοντα. Ὀφελείη μὲν τὸν δεξιὸν ἄνδρα, βλάπτει δὲ τὸν βηβύλιος φωνεῦντα πᾶν ἔπος καὶ ἐν παντὶ δῆμῳ. Χρὴ δὲ καιροῦ μέτρα εἰδέναι· σοφίης γὰρ οὔτος ἔστος. Εἰ δὲ οἱ ἔξω καιροῦ ῥῆσιμιν μουσικὴν πεπνυμένως ἀείσουσιν, οὐ παραδέχονται ἐν ἀργίῃ γνώμην, αἰτίην δ' ἔχουσι μωρίας.

ANAXARCHUS, apud Stobæum, Serm. xxxiv.*

General knowledge and ready talent may be of very great benefit, but they may likewise be of very great disservice, to the possessor. They are highly advantageous to the man of sound judgment, and dexterous in applying them; but they injure your fluent holder-forth on all subjects in all companies. It is necessary to know the measures of the time and occasion: for this is the very boundary of wisdom—(that by which it is defined, and distinguished from mere ability). But he, who without regard to the unsuitness of the time and the audience will soar in the high region of his fancies with his garland and singing robes about him, will not acquire the credit of seriousness amidst frivolity, but will be condemned for his silliness, as the greatest idler of the company because the most unseasonable.

THE moral law, it has been shewn, permits an inadequate communication of unsophisticated truth, on the condition that it alone is practicable, and binds us to silence when neither an adequate, nor even a right, exposition of the truth is in our power. We must first inquire then,—what is necessary to constitute, and what may allowably accompany, a right though inadequate notion,—and, secondly, what are the circumstances, from which we may deduce the impracticability of conveying even a right notion; the presence or absence of which circumstances it therefore becomes our duty to ascertain.

* Edit. Gaisford. — Ed.

- (1) In answer to the first question, the conscience demands
 1. That it should be the wish and design of the mind convey the truth only ; that if in addition to the negat loss implied in its inadequateness, the notion communicated should lead to any positive error, the cause should lie in the fault or defect of the recipient, not of communicator, whose paramount duty, whose inalienable right, it is to preserve his own integrity,* the integrity of his own moral being. Self-respect ; reverence which he owes to the presence of humanity the person of his neighbour ; the reverential uphold of the faith of man in man ; gratitude for the particular act of confidence ; and religious awe for the divine purposes in the gift of language ; are duties too sacred and important to be sacrificed to the guesses of an individual

* The best and most forcible sense of a word is often that, which contained in its etymology. The author of the poems, the Synagogue frequently affixed to Herbert's Temple, gives the original purport the word 'integrity,' in the following lines of the fourth stanza of eighth poem ; *

Next to sincerity, remember still,
 Thou must resolve upon integrity.
 God will have all thou hast, thy mind, thy will,
 Thy thoughts, thy words, thy works.—

And again, after some verses on constancy and humility, the poem concludes with—

He that desires to see
 The face of God, in his religion must
 Sincere, entire, constant, and humble be.

Having mentioned the name of Herbert, that model of a man, gentleman, and a clergyman, let me add, that the quaintness of some of his thoughts, not of his diction, than which nothing can be more pure, manly, and unaffected, has blinded modern readers to the general merit of his poems, which are for the most part exquisite in their kind.

concerning the advantages to be gained by the breach of them. 2. It is further required, that the supposed error shall not be such as will pervert or materially vitiate the imperfect truth, in communicating which we had unwillingly, though not perhaps unwittingly, occasioned it. A barbarian so instructed in the power and intelligence of the infinite Being as to be left wholly ignorant of his moral attributes, would have acquired none but erroneous notions even of the former. At the very best, he would gain only a theory to satisfy his curiosity with ; but more probably, would deduce the belief of a Moloch or a Baal. For the idea of an irresistible, invisible Being naturally produces terror in the mind of uninstructed and unprotected man, and with terror there will be associated whatever has been accustomed to excite it, anger, vengeance, &c. ; as is proved by the mythology of all barbarous nations. This must be the case with all organized truths ; the component parts derive their significance from the idea of the whole. Bolingbroke removed love, justice, and choice, from power and intelligence, and yet pretended to have left unimpaired the conviction of a Deity. He might as consistently have paralyzed the optic nerve, and then excused himself by affirming, that he had, however, not touched the eye.

The third condition of a right though inadequate notion is, that the error occasioned be greatly outweighed by the importance of the truth communicated. The rustic would have little reason to thank the philosopher, who should give him true conceptions of the folly of believing in ghosts, omens, dreams, &c., at the price of abandoning his faith in divine providence, and in the continued existence of his fellow-creatures after their death. The teeth of the old serpent planted by the Cadmuses of French literature, under Lewis XV., produced a

plenteous crop of philosophers and truth-trumpets of this kind, in the reign of his successor. They taught many truths, historical, political, physiological, and philosophical, and diffused their notions so widely, that the very ladies and hairdressers of Paris became fluent clopedists: and the sole price which their scholars paid for these treasures of new information, was to buy Christianity an imposture, the Scriptures a forged worship, if not the belief, of God superstition, hell a heaven a dream, our life without providence, and death without hope. They became as gods as so the fruit of this Upas tree of knowledge and liberty opened their eyes to perceive that they were no more than beasts—somewhat more cunning, perhaps, abundantly more mischievous. What can be more natural than the result,—that self-acknowledged beasts should first act, and next suffer themselves to be treated, as beasts. We judge by comparison. To exalt the great is to magnify the little. The disbelief of essential wisdom and goodness, necessarily prepares the imagination for the supremacy of cunning with malice. Folly and vice have their appropriate religions, as wisdom and true knowledge: and in some way or other fools will dance round the golden calf, and wicked men beat their timbrels and kettle-drums to,—

—Moloch, horrid king, besmeared with blood
Of human sacrifice and parents' tears.

3 | My feelings have led me on, and in my illustration had almost lost from my view the subject to be treated. One condition yet remains: that the error seen shall not be of a kind to prevent or impede the acquirement of that knowledge which will remove. Observe, how graciously nature instructs her

children. She cannot give us the knowledge derived from sight without occasioning us at first to mistake images of reflection for substances. But the very consequences of the delusion lead inevitably to its detection ; and out of the ashes of the error rises a new flower of knowledge. We not only see, but are enabled to discover by what means we see. So, too, we are under the necessity, in given circumstances, of mistaking a square for a round object ; but ere the mistake can have any practical consequences, it is not only removed, but in its removal gives us the symbol of a new fact, that of distance. In a similar train of thought, though more fancifully, I might have elucidated the preceding condition, and have referred our hurrying enlighteners and revolutionary amputators to the gentleness of nature, in the oak and the beech, the dry foliage of which she pushes off only by the propulsion of the new buds, that supply its place. My friends ! a clothing even of withered leaves is better than bareness.

Having thus determined the nature and conditions of a right notion, it remains to consider the circumstances which tend to render the communication of it impracticable, and oblige us of course to abstain from the attempt—oblige us not to convey falsehood under the pretext of saying truth. These circumstances, it is plain, must consist either in natural or moral impediments. The former, including the obvious gradations of constitutional insensibility and derangement, preclude all temptation to misconduct, as well as all probability of ill consequences from accidental oversight, on the part of the communicator. Far otherwise is it with the impediments from moral causes. These demand all the attention and forecast of the genuine lovers of truth in the matter, the manner, and the time of their communi-

cations public and private; and these are the ordinary materials of the vain and the factious, determine the choice of their audiences and of their arguments, to each argument give powers not its own. They distinguishable into two sources, the streams from which however, most often become confluent, namely, hindrances from ignorance,—(I here use the word in relation to habits of reasoning as well as to the previous knowledge requisite for the due comprehension of the subject,) and hindrances from predominant passions.*

From both these the law of conscience commands to abstain, because such being the ignorance and such the passions of the supposed auditors, we ought to deduce the impracticability of conveying not only adequate but even right notions of our own convictions: much less does it permit us to avail ourselves of the causes of this impracticability in order to procure nominal proselytes, each of whom will have a different, and all a false, conception of those notions that were to be conveyed for their truth's sake alone. Whatever is, or but for some defect in our moral character would have been, foreseen as preventing the conveyance of our thoughts, makes the attempt an act of self-contradiction: and whether the faulty cause exist in our choice of unfit words or our choice of unfit auditors, the result is the same and so is the guilt. We have voluntarily communicated falsehood.

Thus, without reference to consequences,—if only one short digression be excepted—from the sole principle of self-consistence or moral integrity, we have evolved the clue of right reason, which we are bound to follow in the communication of truth. Now then let me appeal to the judgment and experience of the reader, whether he

* See Lay Sermon addressed to the higher and middle classes, p. 16.

who most faithfully adheres to the letter of the law of conscience will not likewise act in strictest correspondence to the maxims of prudence and sound policy. I am at least unable to recollect a single instance, either in history or in my personal experience, of a preponderance of injurious consequences from the publication of any truth, under the observance of the moral conditions above stated : much less can I even imagine any case, in which truth, as truth, can be pernicious. But if the asserter of the indifference of truth and falsehood in their own natures, attempt to justify his position by confining the word truth, in the first instance, to the correspondence of given words to given facts, without reference to the total impression left by such words,—what is this more than to assert, that articulated sounds are things of moral indifference ;—and that we may relate a fact accurately, and nevertheless deceive grossly and wickedly ? Blifil related accurately Tom Jones's riotous joy during his benefactor's illness, only omitting that this joy was occasioned by the physician's having pronounced him out of danger. Blifil was not the less a liar for being an accurate matter-of-fact liar. Tell-truths in the service of falsehood we find everywhere, of various names and various occupations, from the elderly young women that discuss the love affairs of their friends and acquaintances at the village tea-tables, to the anonymous calumniators of literary merit in reviews, and the more daring malignants who dole out discontent, innovation, and panic, in political journals : and a most pernicious race of liars they are ! But who ever doubted it ?—Why should our moral feelings be shocked, and the holiest words with all their venerable associations be profaned, in order to bring forth a truism ! But thus it is for the most part with the venders of startling paradoxes. In the sense in

truth would be pernicious

which they are to gain for their author the character of a bold and original thinker, they are false even to absurdity ; and the sense in which they are true and harmless conveys so mere a truism, that it even borders on nonsense. How often have we heard " The rights of man—hurra !—The sovereignty of the people—hurra ! "——roared out by men who, if called upon in another place and before another audience, to explain themselves, would give to the words a meaning, in which the most monarchical of their political opponents would admit them to be true, but which would contain nothing new, or strange, or stimulant, nothing to flatter the pride, or kindle the passions, of the populace !

ESSAY VII.

At profanum vulgus lectorum quomodo arcendum est? Libris nostris iubeamus, ut coram indignis obmutescant? Si lingua, ut dicitur, mortuis utamur, eheu! ingenium quoque nobis mortuum jacet: sin aliter,—Minerva secreta crassis ludibrium divulgamus, et Dianam nostram impuris hujus sæculi Actæonibus nudam proferimus. Respondes:—ad incommoditates hujusmodi evitandas, nec Græce nec Latine scribere opus est. Sufficiet, nos sicca luce usus fuisse et strictiore argumentandi methodo. Sufficiet, innocenter, utiliter scripasis: cretus est apud lectorem. Nuper emptum est a nobis Ciceronianum istud De Officiis, opus quod semper pæne Christiano dignum putabamus. Mirum! libellus factus fuerat famosissimus. Crediane! Vix: at quomodo! Maligno quodam, nescio quem, plena margine et super tergo, annotatum est, et exemplis, calumniis potius, superfatatum! Sic et qui introrsum vitur inflammationes animi vel Catonianis (ne dicam, sacrosandis) pugnis accipit. Omni aura mons, omnibus scriptis mens ignita, vocitur.

RODOLPHI LANGII Kpint. ad amicum quemdam Italicum, in qua lingua patris et hodiernæ usum defendit et eruditus commendat.

Nec me fallit, ut in corporibus hominum sic in animis multiplici passione affectis, medicamenta verborum multis inefficacia risum iri. Sed nec illud quoque me præterit, ut invisibiles animorum morbos, sic invisibilia esse remedia. Falsis opinionibus circumrenti veris sententiis liberandi sunt, ut qui audiendo ceciderant audiendo consurgant.

PETRARCH. Prefat. in lib. de remed. utriusque fortune, sub fin.

But how are we to guard against the herd of promiscuous readers? Can we bid our books be silent in the presence of the unworthy? If we employ what are called the dead languages, our own genius, alas! becomes flat and dead: and if we embody our thoughts in the words native to them or in which they were conceived, we divulge the secrets of Minerva to the ridicule of blockheads, and expose our Diana to the Actæons of a sensual age. I reply: that in order to avoid inconveniences of this kind, we need write neither in Greek nor in Latin. It will be enough, if we abstain from appealing to the bad passions

and low appetites, and confine ourselves to a strictly consequent method of reasoning.

To have written innocently, and for wise purposes, is all that can be required of us : the event lies with the reader. I purchased lately Cicero's work, *De Officiis*, which I had always considered as almost worthy of a Christian. To my surprise it had become a most flagrant libel. Nay ! but how !—Some one, I know not who, out of the fruitfulness of his own malignity, had filled all the margins and other blank spaces with annotations—a true superfection of examples, that is, of false and slanderous tales ! In like manner, the slave of impure desires will turn the pages of Cato, not to say, Scripture itself, into occasions and excitements of wanton imaginations. There is no wind but fans a volcano, no work but feeds a combustible mind.

I am well aware, that words will appear to many as inefficacious medicines when administered to minds agitated with manifold passions, as when they are muttered by way of charm over bodily ailments. But neither does it escape me, on the other hand, that as the diseases of the mind are invisible, invisible must the remedies likewise be. Those who have been entrapped by false opinions are to be liberated by convincing truths : that thus having imbibed the poison through the ear they may receive the antidote by the same channel.

THAT our elder writers to Jeremy Taylor inclusively quoted to excess, it would be the very blindness of partiality to deny. More than one might be mentioned, whose works are well characterized in the words of Milton, as a paroxysm of citations, pampered metaphors, and aphorisming pedantry. On the other hand, it seems to me that we now avoid quotations with an anxiety that offends in the contrary extreme. Yet it is the beauty and independent worth of the citations far more than their appropriateness which have made Johnson's Dictionary popular even as a reading book,—and the mottos with the translations of them are known to add considerably to the value of the Spectator. With this conviction I have taken more than common pains in the selection of the mottos for the Friend : and of two mottos equally appropriate prefer always that from the book which is least likely to have come into my readers' hands. For I often please myself with the fancy, now that I may have

saved from oblivion the only striking passage in a whole volume, and now that I may have attracted notice to a writer undeservedly forgotten. If this should be attributed to a silly ambition in the display of various reading, I can do no more than deny any consciousness of having been so actuated: and for the rest, I must console myself by the reflection, that if it be one of the most foolish, it is at the same time one of the most harmless, of human vanities.

The passages prefixed lead at once to the question, which will probably have more than once occurred to the reflecting reader of the preceding essay. How will these rules apply to the most important mode of communication? to that, in which one man may utter his thoughts to myriads of men at the same time, and to myriads of myriads at various times and through successions of generations? How do they apply to authors, whose foreknowledge does not inform them who, or how many, or of what description, their readers will be? How do these rules apply to books, which once published, are as likely to fall in the way of the incompetent as of the judicious, and will be fortunate indeed if they are not many times looked at through the thick mists of ignorance, or amid the glare of prejudice and passion?—I answer in the first place, that this is not universally true. The readers are not seldom picked and chosen. Relations of certain pretended miracles performed a few years ago, at Holywell, in consequence of prayers to the Virgin Mary, on female servants, and these relations moralized by the old Roman Catholic arguments without the old Protestant answers, have to my knowledge been sold by travelling pedlars in villages and farm-houses, not only in a form which placed them within the reach of the narrowest means, but sold at a price less than

their prime cost, and doubtless, thrown in occasionally as the make-weight in a bargain of pins and stay-tape. Shall I be told, that the publishers and reverend authorizers of these base and vulgar delusions had exerted no choice as to the purchasers and readers? But waiving this, or rather having first pointed it out, as an important exception, I further reply,—that if the author have clearly and rightly established in his own mind the class of readers, to which he means to address his communications; and if both in this choice, and in the particulars of the manner and matter of his work, he conscientiously observe all the conditions which reason and conscience have been shewn to dictate, in relation to those for whom the work was designed; he will, in most instances, have effected his design and realized the desired circumscription. The posthumous work of Spinoza—(*Ethica ordine geometrico demonstrata*)—may, indeed, accidentally fall into the hands of an incompetent reader. But, (not to mention, that it is written in a dead language), it will be entirely harmless, because it must needs be utterly unintelligible. I venture to assert, that the whole first book, *De Deo*, might be read in a literal English translation to any congregation in the kingdom, and that no individual who had not been habituated to the strictest and most laborious processes of reasoning, would even suspect its orthodoxy or piety, however heavily the few who listened might complain of its obscurity and want of interest.

This, it may be objected, is an extreme case. But it is not so for the present purpose. I am speaking of the probability of injurious consequences from the communication of truth. This I have denied, if the right means have been adopted, and the necessary conditions adhered to, for its actual communication. Now the truths—that is, the positions believed by the author to be truths—

conveyed in a book are either evident of themselves, or such as require a train of deductions in proof; and the latter will be either such truths as are authorized and generally received; or such as are in opposition to received and authorized opinions; or lastly, positions presented as truths for the appropriate test of examination, and still under trial, *adhuc in lite*. Of this latter class I affirm, that in no one of the three sorts can an instance be brought of a preponderance of ill-consequences, or even of an equilibrium of advantage and injury from a work, in which the understanding alone has been appealed to, by results fairly deduced from just premisses, in terms strictly appropriate. Alas! legitimate reasoning is impossible without severe thinking, and thinking is neither an easy nor an amusing employment. The reader, who would follow a close reasoner to the summit and absolute principle of any one important subject, has chosen a chamois-hunter for his guide. Our guide will, indeed, take us the shortest way, will save us many a wearisome and perilous wandering, and warn us of many a mock road that had formerly led himself to the brink of chasms and precipices, or at best in an idle circle to the spot from which he started. But he cannot carry us on his shoulders: we must strain our own sinews, as he has strained his; and make firm footing on the smooth rock for ourselves, by the blood of toil from our own feet. Examine the journals of our humane and zealous missionaries in Hindostan. How often and how feelingly do they describe the difficulty of making the simplest chain of reasoning intelligible to the ordinary natives: the rapid exhaustion of their whole power of attention, and with what pain and distressful effort it is exerted, while it lasts. Yet it is amongst individuals of this class, that the hideous practices of self-torture chiefly,

indeed almost exclusively, prevail. O ! if folly were no easier than wisdom, it being often so very much more grievous, how certainly might not these miserable men be converted to Christianity ? But alas ! to swing by hooks passed through the back, or to walk on shoes with nails of iron pointed upward on the soles, all this is so much less difficult, demands so very inferior an exertion of the will than to think, and by thought to gain knowledge and tranquillity !

It is not true, that ignorant persons have no notion of the advantages of truth and knowledge. They see and confess those advantages in the conduct, the immunities, and the superior powers of the possessors. Were these attainable by pilgrimages the most toilsome, or penances the most painful, we should assuredly have as many pilgrims and as many self-tormentors in the service of true religion and virtue, as now exist under the tyranny of Papal or Brahman superstition. This inefficacy of legitimate reason, from the want of fit objects,—this its relative weakness, and how narrow at all times its immediate sphere of action must be,—is proved to us by the impostors of all professions. What, I pray, is their fortress, the rock which is both their quarry and their foundation, from which and on which they are built ?—The desire of arriving at the end without the effort of thought and will, which are the appointed means. Let us look backward three or four centuries. Then, as now, the great mass of mankind were governed by the three main wishes, the wish for vigour of body, including the absence of painful feelings ;—for wealth, or the power of procuring the external conditions of bodily enjoyment,—these during life ; and security from pain and continuance of happiness after death. Then, as now, men were desirous to attain them by some easier means

than those of temperance, industry, and strict justice. They gladly therefore applied to the priest, who could insure them happiness hereafter without the performance of their duties here ; to the lawyer who could make money a substitute for a right cause ; to the physician, whose medicines promised to take the sting out of the tail of their sensual indulgences, and let them fondle and play with vice, as with a charmed serpent ; to the alchemist, whose gold-tincture would enrich them without toil or economy ; and to the astrologer, from whom they could purchase foresight without knowledge or reflection. The established professions were, without exception, no other than licensed modes of witchcraft. The wizards, who would now find their due reward in Bridewell, and their appropriate honours in the pillory, sat then on episcopal thrones, candidates for sainthood, and already canonized in the belief of their deluded contemporaries ; while the one or two real teachers and discoverers of truth were exposed to the hazard of fire and faggot,—a dungeon the best shrine that was vouchsafed to a Roger Bacon * and a Galileo !

* "It is for his country, not his order, to glory in the man whom that order condemned to imprisonment, not for his supposed skill in magic, but for those opinions which he derived from studying the Scriptures, wherein he was versed beyond any other person of his age."—SOUTHERN'S *Colloquia*, viii.

And see the note there.—*Ed.*



ESSAY VIII.

Pray, why is it, that people say that men are not such fools now-a-days as they were in the days of yore? I would fain know, whether you would have us understand by this same saying, as indeed you logically may, that formerly, men were fools, and in this generation are grown wise? How many and what dispositions made them fools? How many and what dispositions were wanting to make 'em wise? Why were those fools? How should these be wise? Pray, how came you to know that men were formerly fools? How did you find that they are now wise? Who made them fools? Who in Heaven's name made us wise? Who d'ye think are most, those that loved mankind foolish, or those that love it wise? How long has it been wise? How long otherwise? Whence proceeded the foregoing folly? Whence the following wisdom? Why did the old folly end now and no later? Why did the modern wisdom begin now and no sooner? What were we the worse for the former folly? What the better for the succeeding wisdom? How should the ancient folly have come to nothing? How should this same new wisdom be started up and established? Now answer me, an't please you!—RABELAIS' *Preface to his 5th Book*.

MONSTERS and madmen canonized and Galileo blind in a dungeon! * It is not so in our times. Heaven be praised, that in this respect, at least, we are, if not better, yet better off, than our forefathers. But to what, and to whom (under Providence) do we owe the improvement? To any radical change in the moral affections of mankind in general? Perhaps the great

* This is not strictly accurate. Galileo was sentenced by the Inquisition at Rome, on the 22nd of June, 1633; and, although his right eye had been formerly affected, he did not become blind till the end of 1637. His confinement, likewise, in the proper prison of the Inquisition, was merely nominal, although the restrictions under which he was kept to the end of his life, were of the most distressing and injurious description.—*Ed.*

majority of men are now fully conscious that they are born with the god-like faculty of reason, and that it is the business of life to develope and apply it?—The Jacob's ladder of truth, let down from heaven, with all its numerous rounds, is now the common highway, on which we are content to toil upward to the objects of our desires?—We are ashamed of expecting the end without the means?—In order to answer these questions in the affirmative, I must have forgotten the animal magnetists;* the proselytes of Brothers, and of Joanna Southcote; and some thousand fanatics less original in their creeds, but not a wit more rational in their expectations; I must forget the infamous empirics, whose advertisements pollute and disgrace all our newspapers, and almost paper the walls of our cities; and the vending of whose poisons and poisonous drams—with shame and anguish be it spoken—supports a shop in every market-town! I must forget that other reproach of the nation, that mother-vice, the lottery! I must forget, that a numerous class plead prudence for keeping their fellow-men ignorant and incapable of intellectual enjoyments, and the revenue for upholding such temptations as men so ignorant will not withstand,—yes! that even senators and officers of state put forth the revenue as a sufficient reason for upholding, at every fiftieth door throughout the kingdom, temptations to the most pernicious vices, which fill the land with mourning, and fit the labouring classes for sedition and religious fanaticism! Above all I must forget the first years of the French revolution, and the millions throughout Europe who confidently expected the best and choicest

* Recanted since 1817. After subtracting all exaggerated or doubtful testimonies, the undeniable facts are as important as they are surprising.

results of knowledge and virtue, namely, liberty and universal peace, from the votes of a tumultuous assembly—that is, from the mechanical agitation of the air in a large room at Paris—and this too in the most light, unthinking, sensual, and profligate, of the European nations,—a nation, the very phrases of whose language are so composed, that they can scarcely speak without lying!—No! Let us not deceive ourselves. Like the man who used to pull off his hat with great demonstration of respect whenever he spoke of himself, we are fond of styling our own the enlightened age: though as Jortin, I think, has wittily remarked, the golden age would be more appropriate. But in spite of our great scientific discoveries, for which praise be given to whom the praise is due, and in spite of that general indifference to all the truths and all the principles of truth, that belong to our permanent being, and therefore do not lie within the sphere of our senses,—that same indifference which makes toleration so easy a virtue with us, and constitutes nine-tenths of our pretended illumination,—it still remains the character of the mass of mankind to seek for the attainment of their necessary ends by any means rather than the appointed ones; and for this cause only, that the latter imply the exertion of the reason and the will. But of all things this demands the longest apprenticeship, even an apprenticeship from infancy; which is generally neglected, because an excellence, that may and should belong to all men, is expected to come to every man of its own accord.

To whom then do we owe our meliorated condition? —To the successive few in every age,—more indeed in one generation than in another, but relatively to the mass of mankind always few,—who by the intensity and permanence of their action have compensated for the

limited sphere, within which it is at any one time intelligible; and whose good deeds posterity reverences in their results; though the mode, in which we repair the inevitable waste of time, and the style of our additions, too generally furnish a sad proof, how little we understand the principles. I appeal to the histories of the Jewish, the Grecian, and the Roman republics, to the records of the Christian Church, to the history of Europe from the treaty of Westphalia, 1648. What do they contain but accounts of noble structures raised by the wisdom of the few, and gradually undermined by the ignorance and profligacy of the many? If therefore the deficiency of good, which everywhere surrounds us, originate in the general unfitness and aversion of men to the process of thought, that is, to continuous reasoning, it must surely be absurd to apprehend a preponderance of evil from works which cannot act at all except as far as they call the reasoning faculties into full co-exertion with them.

Still, however, there are truths so self-evident, or so immediately and palpably deduced from those that are, or are acknowledged for such, that they are at once intelligible to all men, who possess the common advantages of the social state; although by sophistry, by evil habits, by the neglect, false persuasions, and impostures of an anti-Christian priesthood joined in one conspiracy with the violence of tyrannical governors, the understandings of men may become so darkened and their consciences so lethargic, that a necessity will arise for the republication of these truths, and this too with a voice of loud alarm, and impassioned warning. Such were the doctrines proclaimed by the first Christians to the Pagan world; such were the lightnings flashed by Wickliff, Huss, Luther, Calvin, Zuinglius, Latimer, and

others, across the Papal darkness; and such in our own times the agitating truths, with which Thomas Clarkson, and his excellent confederates, the Quakers, fought and conquered the legalized *banditti* of men-stealers, the numerous and powerful perpetrators and advocates of rapine, murder, and (of blacker guilt than either) slavery. Truths of this kind being indispensable to man, considered as a moral being, are above all expedience, all accidental consequences: for as sure as God is holy, and man immortal, there can be no evil so great as the ignorance or disregard of them. It is the very madness of mock prudence to oppose the removal of a poisoned dish on account of the pleasant sauces or nutritious viands which would be lost with it! The dish contains destruction to that, for which alone we ought to wish the palate to be gratified, or the body to be nourished.

✓ } The sole condition, therefore, imposed on us by the law of conscience in these cases is, that we employ no unworthy and heterogeneous means to realize the necessary end,—that we entrust the event wholly to the full and adequate promulgation of the truth, and to those generous affections which the constitution of our moral nature has linked to the full perception of it. Yet evil may, nay it will, be occasioned. Weak men may take offence, and wicked men avail themselves of it; though we must not attribute to the promulgation, or to the truth promulgated, all the evil, of which wicked men—predetermined, like the wolf in the fable, to create some occasion—may choose to make it the pretext. But that there ever was, or ever can be, a preponderance of evil, I defy either the historian to instance, or the philosopher to prove. “Let it fly away, all that chaff of light faith that can fly off at any breath of temptation; the cleaner will the true grain be stored up in the granary of

the Lord,"—we are entitled to say with Tertullian: "and to exclaim with heroic Luther,—“Scandal and offence! Talk not to me of scandal and offence. Need breaks through stone walls, and recks not of scandal. It is my duty to spare weak consciences as far as it may be done without hazard of my soul. Where not, I must take counsel for my soul, though half or the whole world should be scandalized thereby.”†

Luther felt and preached and wrote and acted, as beseeemed a Luther to feel and utter and act. The truths, which had been outraged, he re-proclaimed in the spirit of outraged truth, at the behest of his conscience and in the service of the God of truth. He did his duty, come good, come evil! and made no question, on which side the preponderance would be. In the one scale there was gold, and impressed thereon the image and superscription of the universal Sovereign. In all the wide and ever-widening commerce of mind with mind throughout the world, it is treason to refuse it. Can this have a counter-weight? The other scale indeed might have seemed full up to the very balance-yard; but of what worth and substance were its contents? Were they capable of being counted or weighed against the former? The conscience, indeed, is already violated when to moral good or evil we oppose things possessing no moral interest. Even if the conscience dared waive this her preventive *veto*, yet before we could consider the twofold results in the relation of loss and gain, it must be known

* *Avolent, quantum volent, paleæ leves filci quocunque assintu tentationum! eo purior massa frumenti in horrea Domini reponetur.* De Prescript. advers. Hæretic. I. c. 3.—Ed.

† *Aergermiss hin, Aergermiss her! Noth bricht Eisen, und hat kein Aergermiss. Ich soll der schwachen Gewissen erkhonen so fern es ohne Gefahr meiner Seelen geschehen mag. Wo nicht, es soll ich meiner Seelen rathen, es aerger sich daran die ganze oder halbe Welt.*

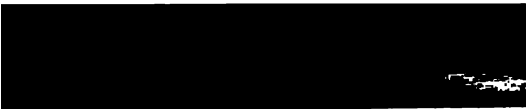
whether their kind is the same or equivalent. They must first be valued, and then they may be weighed or counted, if they are worth it. But in the particular case at present before us, the loss is contingent and alien ; the gain essential and the tree's own natural produce. The gain is permanent, and spreads through all times and places ; the loss but temporary, and owing its very being to vice or ignorance, vanishes at the approach of knowledge and moral improvement. The gain reaches all good men, belongs to all that love light and desire an increase of light : to all and of all times, who thank Heaven for the gracious dawn, and expect the noon-day ; who welcome the first gleams of spring, and sow their fields in confident faith of the ripening summer and the rewarding harvest-tide ! But the loss is confined to the unenlightened and the prejudiced—say rather, to the weak and the prejudiced of a single generation. The prejudices of one age are condemned even by the prejudiced of the succeeding ages : for endless are the modes of folly, and the fool joins the wise in passing sentence on all modes but his own. Who cried out with greater horror against the murderers of the Prophets, than those who likewise cried out, Crucify him ! Crucify him !—Prophet and Saviour, and Lord of life, Crucify him ! Crucify him !—The truth-haters of every future generation will call the truth-haters of the preceding ages by their true names : for even these the stream of time carries onward. In fine, truth considered in itself and in the effects natural to it, may be conceived as a gentle spring or water-source, warm from the genial earth, and breathing up into the snow drift that is piled over and around its outlet. It turns the obstacle into its own form and character, and as it makes its way increases its stream. And should it be arrested in its course by a

chilling season, it suffers delay, not loss, and waits only for a change in the wind to awaken and again roll onwards :—

*I semplici pastori
Sul Vesolo neroso
Fatti curvi e canuti,
D' alto stupor son mu'i,
Mirando al fonte ombroso
Il Po con pochi umori ;
Poesia udendo gli onori
Dell' urna angusta e stretta,
Che 'l Adda, che 'l Tesino
Soverchia in suo cammino,
Che ampio al mar 's affretta,
Che si spuma, e si suona,
Che gli si dà corona ! **

'The simple shepherds grown bent and hoary-headed on the snowy Vesolo, are mute with deep astonishment, gazing in the overshadowed fountain on the Po with his scanty waters ; then hearing of the honours of his confined and narrow urn, how he receives as a sovereign the ADDA and the TESINO in his course, how ample he hastens on to the sea, how he foams, how mighty his voice, and that to him the crown is assigned.'

* *Chiabrera Rime*, xxviii. "But falsehood," continues Mr. C., "is fire in stubble ; it likewise turns all the light stuff around it into its own substance for a moment, one crackling blazing moment,—and then dies ; and all its converts are scattered in the wind, without place or evidence of their existence, as viewless as the wind which scatters them."—*Lit. Rem.* vol. I. *Omuiana*.—*Ed.*



ESSAY IX.

Great men have liv'd among us, heads that plann'd
And tongues that utter'd wisdom—better none.

Even so doth Heaven protect us !

WORDSWORTH.

✓ { In the preceding essay I have explained the good, that is, the natural consequences of the promulgation to all of truths which all are bound to know and to make known. The evils occasioned by it, with few and rare exceptions, have their origin in the attempts to suppress or pervert it ; in the fury and violence of imposture attacked or undermined in her strongholds, or in the extravagances of ignorance and credulity roused from their lethargy, and angry at the medicinal disturbance—awaking, not yet broad awake, and thus biending the monsters of uneasy dreams with the real objects, on which the drowsy eye had alternately half opened and closed, again half-opened and again closed. This reaction of deceit and superstition, with all the trouble and tumult incident, I would compare to a fire which bursts forth from some stifled and fermenting mass on the first admission of light and air. It roars and blazes, and converts the already spoilt or damaged stuff with all the straw and straw-like matter near it, first into flame and the next moment into ashes. The fire dies away, the ashes are scattered on all the winds, and what began in worthlessness ends in nothingness. Such are the evil,

that is, the casual consequences of the same promulgation.

It argues a narrow or corrupt nature to lose sight of the general and lasting consequences of rare and virtuous energy, in the brief accidents, which accompanied its first movements—to set lightly by the emancipation of the human reason from a legion of devils, in our complaints and lamentations over the loss of a herd of swine ! The Cranmers, Hampdens, and Sidneys,—the counsellors of our Elizabeth, and the friends of our other great deliverer the third William,—is it in vain, that these have been our countrymen ? Are we not the heirs of their good deeds ? And what are noble deeds but noble truths realized ? As Protestants, as Englishmen, as the inheritors of so ample an estate of might and right, an estate so strongly fenced, so richly planted, by the sinewy arms and dauntless hearts of our forefathers, we of all others have good cause to trust in the truth, yea, to follow its pillar of fire through the darkness and the desert, even though its light should but suffice to make us certain of its own presence. If there be elsewhere men jealous of the light, who prophesy an excess of evil over good from its manifestation, we are entitled to ask them, on what experience they ground their bodings ? Our own country bears no traces, our own history contains no records, to justify them. From the great æras of national illumination we date the commencement of our main national advantages. The tangle of delusions, which stifled and distorted the growing tree, have been torn away ; the parasite weeds, that fed on its very roots, have been plucked up with a salutary violence. To us there remain only quiet duties, the constant care, the gradual improvement, the cautious, unhazardous, labours of the industrious though contented gardener—to prune,

to engraft, and one by one to remove from its leaves and fresh shoots the slug and the caterpillar. But far be it from us to undervalue with light and senseless detraction the conscientious hardihood of our predecessors, or even to condemn in them that vehemence, to which the blessings it won for us leave us now neither temptation nor pretext. That the very terms, with which the bigot or the hireling would blacken the first publishers of political and religious truth, are, and deserve to be, hateful to us, we owe to the effects of its publication. We antedate the feelings in order to criminate the authors of our tranquillity, opulence, and scenity. But let us be aware. Effects will not, indeed, immediately disappear with their causes ; but neither can they long continue without them. If by the reception of truth in the spirit of truth, we became what we are ; only by the retention of it in the same spirit, can we remain what we are. The narrow seas that form our boundaries,—what were they in times of old ? The convenient highway for Danish and Norman pirates. What are they now ? Still but a “span of waters.” Yet they roll at the base of the inisled Ararat, on which the ark of the hope of Europe and of civilization rested !

Even so doth God protect us, if we be
Virtuous and wise. Winds blow and waters roll,
Strength to the brave, and power and deity :
Yet in themselves are nothing ! One decree
Spake laws to them, and said that by the soul
Only the nations shall be great and free !

WORDSWORTH.

ESSAY X.

I deny not but that it is of greatest concernment in the church and commonwealth to have a vigilant eye how books demean themselves as well as men ; and thereafter to confine, imprison, and do sharpest justice on them as malefactors. For books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a potency of life in them to be as active as that soul was whose progeny they are ; nay, they do preserve as in a vial the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that bred them. I know they are as lively and as vigorously productive as those fabulous dragon's teeth : and being sown up and down may chance to spring up armed men. And yet on the other hand, unless wariness be used, as good almost kill a man as kill a good book. Who kills a man, kills a reasonable creature, God's image ; but he who destroys a good book, kills reason itself, kills the image of God, as it were in the eye. Many a man lives a burthen to the earth ; but a good book is the precious life-blood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life.—*Milton's Speech for the liberty of unlicensed printing.*

THUS far then I have been conducting a cause between an individual and his own mind. Proceeding on the conviction, that to man is entrusted the nature, not the result, of his actions, I have presupposed no calculations ; I have presumed no foresight.—Introduce no contradiction into thy own consciousness. Acting, or abstaining from action, delivering or withholding thy thoughts, whatsoever thou doest, do it in singleness of heart. In all things, therefore, let thy means correspond to thy purpose, and let the purpose be one with the purport.—To this principle I have referred the supposed individual, and from this principle solely I have deduced each particular of his conduct. As far, therefore, as the court of conscience extends,—and in this court alone I have been

pleading hitherto,—I have won the cause. It has been decided, that there is no just ground for apprehending mischief from truth communicated conscientiously,—that is, with a strict observance of all the conditions required by the conscience ;—that what is not so communicated, is falsehood, and that to the falsehood, not to the truth, must the ill consequences be attributed.

Another and altogether different cause remains now to be pleaded ; a different cause, and in a different court. The parties concerned are no longer the well-meaning individual and his conscience, but the citizen and the state—the citizen, who may be a fanatic as probably as a philosopher, and the state, which concerns itself with the conscience only as far as it appears in the action, or still more accurately, in the fact ; and which must determine the nature of the fact not merely by a rule of right formed from the modification of particular by general consequences,—not merely by a principle of compromise, that reduces the freedom of each citizen to the common measure in which it becomes compatible with the freedom of all ; but likewise by the relation which the facts bear to its,—the state's,—own instinctive principle of self-preservation. For every depository of the supreme power must presume itself rightful : and as the source of law not legally to be endangered. A form of government may indeed, in reality, be most pernicious to the governed, and the highest moral honour may await the patriot who risks his life in order by its subversion to introduce a better and juster constitution ; but it would be absurd to blame the law by which his life is declared forfeit. It were to expect, that by an involved contradiction the law should allow itself not to be law, by allowing the state, of which it is a part, not to be a state. For, as Hooker has well observed, the law of men's

actions is one, if they be respected only as men; and another, when they are considered as parts of a body politic.*

But though every government subsisting in law,—for pure lawless despotism grounding itself wholly on terror precludes all consideration of duty,—though every government subsisting in law must, and ought to, regard itself as the life of the body politic, of which it is the head, and consequently must punish every attempt against itself as an act of assault or murder, that is, sedition or treason; yet still it ought so to secure the life as not to prevent the conditions of its growth, and of that adaptation to circumstances, without which its very life becomes insecure. In the application, therefore, of these principles to the public communication of opinions by the most efficient mean,—we have to decide, whether consistently with them there should be any liberty of the press; and if this be answered in the affirmative, what shall be declared abuses of that liberty, and made punishable as such; and in what way the general law shall be applied to each particular case.

First, then, ought there to be any liberty of the press? I do not here mean, whether it should be permitted to print books at all;—for this essay has little chance of being read in Turkey, and in any other part of Europe it cannot be supposed questionable—but whether by the appointment of a censorship the government should take upon itself the responsibility of each particular publication. In governments purely monarchical,—that is, oligarchies under one head,—the balance of advantage and disadvantage from this monopoly of the press will undoubtedly be affected by the general state of informa-

* Eccl. Pol. I. xvi. 6.—Ed.

tion ; though after reading Milton's "Speech for the liberty of unlicensed printing" * we shall probably be inclined to believe, that the best argument in favour of licensing under any constitution is that, which supposing the ruler to have a different interest from that of his country, and even from himself as a reasonable and moral creature, grounds itself on the incompatibility of knowledge with folly, oppression, and degradation. What our prophetic Harrington said of religious, applies equally to literary, toleration :—"If it be said that in France there is liberty of conscience in part, it is also plain that while the hierarchy is standing, this liberty is falling, and that if ever it comes to pull down the hierarchy, it pulls down that monarchy also : wherefore the monarchy or hierarchy will be beforehand with it, if they see their true interest." † On the other hand, there is no slight danger from general ignorance : and the only choice, which Providence has graciously left to a vicious government, is either to fall by the people, if they are suffered to become enlightened, or with them, if they are kept enslaved and ignorant.

The nature of our constitution, since the Revolution, the state of our literature, and the wide diffusion, if not of intellectual, yet of literary, power, and the almost universal interest in the productions of literature, have set the question at rest relatively to the British press. However great the advantages of previous examination

* *Il y a un voile qui doit toujours couvrir tout ce que l'on peut dire et tout ce qu'on peut croire du droit des peuples et de celui des princes, qui ne s'accordent jamais si bien ensemble que dans le silence.*—Mém. du Card. de Retz.

How severe a satire where it can be justly applied ! how false and calumnious if meant as a general maxim !

† Syst. of Politics, vi. 10.—Ed.

might be under other circumstances, in this country it would be both impracticable and inefficient. I need only suggest in broken sentences—the prodigious number of licensers that would be requisite—the variety of their attainments, and—inasmuch as the scheme must be made consistent with our religious freedom—the ludicrous variety of their principles and creeds—their number being so great, and each appointed censor being himself a man of letters, *quis custodiet ipsos custodes*? If these numerous licensers hold their offices for life, and independently of the ministry *pro tempore*, a new, heterogeneous, and alarming power is introduced, which can never be assimilated to the constitutional powers already existing:—if they are removable at pleasure, that which is heretical and seditious in 1809, may become orthodox and loyal in 1810;—and what man, whose attainments and moral respectability gave him even an endurable claim to this awful trust, would accept a situation at once so invidious and so precarious? And what institution can retain any useful influence in so free a nation when its abuses have made it contemptible? Lastly, and which of itself would suffice to justify the rejection of such a plan—unless all proportion between crime and punishment were abandoned, what penalties could the law attach to the assumption of a liberty, which it had denied, more severe than those which it now attaches to the abuse of the liberty, which it grants? In all those instances at least, which it would be most the inclination—perhaps the duty—of the state to prevent, namely, in seditious and incendiary publications,—(whether actually such, or only such as the existing government chose so to denominate, makes no difference in the argument)—the publisher, who hazards the punishment now assigned to seditious publications, would assuredly hazard the

penalties of unlicensed ones, especially as the very practice of licensing would naturally diminish the attention to the contents of the works published, the chance of impunity therefore be so much greater, and the artifice of prefixing an unauthorised licence so likely to escape detection. It is a fact, that in many of the former German states in which literature flourished, notwithstanding the establishment of censors or licensors, three fourths of the books printed were unlicensed—even those, the contents of which were unobjectionable, and where the sole motive for evading the law, must have been either the pride and delicacy of the author, or the indolence of the bookseller. So difficult was the detection, so various the means of evasion, and worse than all, from the nature of the law and the affront it offers to the pride of human nature, such was the merit attached to the breach of it—a merit commencing perhaps with Luther's Bible, and other prohibited works of similar great minds, published with no dissimilar purpose, and thence by many an intermediate link of association finally connected with books, of the very titles of which a good man would wish to remain ignorant. The interdictory catalogues of the Romish hierarchy always present to my fancy the muster-rolls of the two hostile armies of Michael and of Satan printed promiscuously, or extracted at haphazard, save only that the extracts from the former appear somewhat the more numerous. And yet even in Naples, and in Rome itself, whatever difficulty occurs in procuring any article catalogued in these formidable folios, must arise either from the scarcity of the work itself, or the absence of all interest in it. Assuredly there is no difficulty in obtaining from the most respectable booksellers the vilest provocatives to the basest crimes, though intermixed with gross lam-

poons on the heads of the church, the religious orders, and on religion itself. The stranger is invited into an inner room, and the proscribed wares presented to him with most significant looks and gestures, implying the hazard, and the necessity of secrecy. A creditable English bookseller would deem himself insulted, if such works were even inquired after at his shop. It is a well-known fact, that with the mournful exception indeed of political provocatives, and the titillations of vulgar envy provided by our anonymous critics, the loathsome articles are among us vended and offered for sale almost exclusively by foreigners. Such are the salutary effects of a free press, and the generous habit of action imbibed from the blessed air of law and liberty, even by men who neither understand the principle, nor feel the sentiment, of the dignified purity, to which they yield obedience from the instinct of character. As there is a national guilt which can be charged but gently on each individual, so are there national virtues, which can as little be imputed to the individuals,—no where, however, but in countries where liberty is the presiding influence, the universal medium and menstruum of all other excellence, moral and intellectual. Admirably doth the admirable Petrarch admonish us :—

*Nec sibi vero quisquam falso persuadeat, eos qui pro libertate exultant, atque hactenus deserte reipublicæ partes suscipiunt, alienum agere negotium ; suum agunt. In hac una reposita sibi omnia norint omnes, securitatem mercator, gloriam miles, utilitatem agricola. Postremo, in eadem religiosi cæremonias, otium studiosi, requiem senes, rudimenta disciplinarum pueri, nuptias puellæ, pudicitiam matronæ, gaudium omnes invenient. * * * * Huic uni reliquæ cedant curæ ! Si hanc omittitis, in quantalibet occupatione nihil agitis : si huic incumbitis, etsi nihil agere*

*videmini, cumulate tamen et civium et virorum implevistis officia.**

Nor let any one falsely persuade himself, that those who keep watch and ward for liberty, are meddling with things that do not concern them, instead of minding their own business. For all men should know, that all blessings are stored and protected in this one, as in a common repository. Here is the tradesman's security, the soldier's honour, the agriculturist's profit. Lastly, in this one good of liberty the religious will find the permission of their rites and forms of worship, the students their learned leisure, the aged their repose, boys the rudiments of the several branches of their education, maidens their chaste nuptials, matrons their womanly honour and the dignity of their modesty, fathers of families the dues of natural affection and the sacred privileges of their ancient home, every one their hope and their joy. To this one solicitude therefore let all other cares yield the priority. If you omit this, be occupied as much and sedulously as you may, you are doing nothing: If you apply your heart and strength to this, though you seem to be doing nothing, you will, nevertheless, have been fulfilling the duties of citizens and of men, yea, in a measure pressed down and running over.

I quote Petrarch often in the hope of drawing the attention of scholars to his inestimable Latin writings. Let me add, in the wish likewise of recommending to the London publishers a translation of select passages from his treatises and letters. If I except the German writings and original letters of the heroic Luther, I do not remember a work from which so delightful and instructive a volume might be compiled.

* *Petrarch. Epist. 45, ad Nicolaum tribunum urbis almæ novissimum et ad populum Romanum.* The translation contains clauses referring to expressions, which in the second edition, were inserted in the Latin quotation by Mr. C. himself.—Ed.

To give the true bent to the above extract, it is necessary to bear in mind, that he who keeps watch and ward for freedom, has to guard against two enemies, the despotism of the few and the despotism of the many—but especially in the present day against the sycophants of the populace.

Licence they mean, when they cry liberty !
For who loves that, must first be wise and good.

Liberty }

ESSAY XI.

Nemo vero fallatur, quasi minora sint animorum contagia quam corporum. Majora sunt; gravius ledunt; altius descendant, serpantque latentius.—PETRARCH. De Vit. Solit. L. i. tract. 3. c. 4.

And let no man be deceived as if the contagions of the soul were less than those of the body. They are yet greater; they convey more direful diseases; they sink deeper, and creep on more unsuspectedly.

WE have abundant reason then to infer, that the law of England has done well and concluded wisely in proceeding on the principle so clearly worded by Milton “that a book should be as freely admitted into the world as any other birth; and if it prove a monster, who denies but that it may justly be burnt or sunk into the sea?” We have reason then, I repeat, to rest satisfied with our laws, which no more prevent a book coming into the world unlicensed, lest it should prove a libel than a traveller from passing unquestioned through our turnpike gates, because it is possible he may be a highwayman. Innocence is presumed in both cases. The publication is a part of the offence, and its necessary condition. Words are moral acts and words deliberately made public the law considers in the same light as any other cognizable overt act.

Here, however, a difficulty presents itself. Theft robbery, murder, and the like are easily defined: the degrees and circumstances likewise of these and similar actions are definite, and constitute specific offences described and punishable each under its own name. W

have only to prove the fact and identify the offender. The intention too, in the great majority of cases, is so clearly implied in the action, that the law can safely adopt it as its universal maxim, that the proof of the malice is included in the proof of the fact; especially as the few occasional exceptions have their remedy provided in the prerogative of pardon entrusted to the supreme magistrate. But in the case of libel, the degree makes the kind, the circumstances constitute the criminality; and both degrees and circumstances, like the ascending shades of colour or the shooting hues of a dove's neck, die away into each other, incapable of definition or outline. The eye of the understanding, indeed, sees the determinate difference in each individual case, but language is most often inadequate to express what the eye perceives, much less can a general statute anticipate and pre-define it. Again: in other overt acts a charge disproved leaves the accused either guilty of a different fault, or at best simply blameless. A man having killed a fellow-citizen is acquitted of murder;—the act was manslaughter only, or it was justifiable homicide. But when we reverse the iniquitous sentence passed on Algernon Sidney, during our perusal of his work on government; at the moment we deny it to have been a traitorous libel, our beating hearts declare it to have been a benefaction to our country, and under the circumstances of those times the performance of an heroic duty. From this cause, therefore, as well as from a libel's being a thing made up of degrees and circumstances,—and these too, discriminating offence from merit by such dim and ambulant boundaries,—the intention of the agent, wherever it can be independently or inclusively ascertained, must be allowed a great share in determining the character of the action, unless the law is not only to be

divorced from moral justice, but to wage open hostility against it.*

Add too, that laws in doubtful points are to be interpreted according to the design of the legislator, where this can be certainly inferred. But the laws of England which owe their own present supremacy and absoluteness to the good sense and generous dispositions diffused by the press more, far more, than to any other single cause, must needs be presumed favourable to its general influence. Even in the penalties attached to its abuse, we must suppose the legislature to have been actuated by the desire of preserving its essential privileges. The press is indifferently the passive instrument of evil and of good: nay, there is some good even in its evil. "Good and evil we know," says Milton, in the Speech from which I have selected the motto of the preceding essay, "in the field of this world grow up together almost inseparably; and the knowledge of good is so involved and interwoven with the knowledge of evil, and in so many cunning resemblances hardly to be discerned, that those confused seeds which were imposed on Psyche as an incessant labour to cull out and sort asunder, were not more intermixed."—"As, therefore, the state of man now is, what wisdom can there be to choose, what continence to forbear, without the knowledge of evil? He that can apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and yet prefer that which is truly better, he is the true way-faring Christian. I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary."—"That virtue, there-

* According to the old adage: you are not hanged for stealing a horse, but that horses may not be stolen. To what extent this is true, I shall have occasion to examine hereafter.

fore, which is but a youngling in the contemplation of evil, and knows not the utmost that vice promises to her followers, and rejects it, is but a blank virtue, not a pure."—"Since, therefore, the knowledge and survey of vice is in this world so necessary to the constituting of human virtue, and the scanning of error to the confirmation of truth, how can we more safely and with less danger scout into the regions of sin and falsity, than by reading all manner of tractates, and hearing all manner of reason?"—Again—but, indeed the whole treatise is one strain of moral wisdom and political prudence:—"Why should we then affect a rigour contrary to the manner of God and of nature, by abridging or scanting those means, which books, freely permitted, are both to the trial of virtue and the exercise of truth? It would be better done to learn, that the law must needs be frivolous, which goes to restrain things uncertainly, and yet equally, working to good and to evil. And were I the chooser, a dram of well-doing should be preferred before many times as much the forcible hindrance of evil-doing. For God, sure, esteems the growth and completion of one virtuous person, more than the restraint of ten vicious."

The evidence of history is strong in favour of the same principles, even in respect of their expediency. The average result of the press from Henry VIII. to Charles I. was such a diffusion of religious light as first redeemed and afterwards saved this nation from the spiritual and moral death of Popery; and in the following period it is to the press that we owe the gradual ascendancy of those wise political maxims, which casting philosophic truth in the moulds of national laws, customs, and existing orders of society, subverted the tyranny without suspending the government, and at length completed

the mild and salutary revolution by the establishment of the house of Brunswick. To what must we attribute this vast over-balance of good in the general effects of the press, but to the over-balance of virtuous intention in those who employed the press? The law, therefore, will not refuse to manifest good intention a certain weight even in cases of apparent error, lest it should discourage and scare away those, to whose efforts we owe the comparative infrequency and weakness of error on the whole. The law may however, nay, it must, demand, that the external proofs of the author's honest intentions should be supported by the general style and matter of his work, and by the circumstances and mode of its publication. A passage, which in a grave and regular disquisition would be blameless, might become highly libellous and justly punishable if it were applied to present measures or persons for immediate purposes, in a cheap and popular tract. I have seldom felt greater indignation than at finding in a large manufactory a sixpenny pamphlet, containing a selection of inflammatory paragraphs from the prose-writings of Milton, without a hint given of the time, occasion, state of government, and other circumstances under which they were written—not a hint, that the freedom, which we now enjoy, exceeds all that Milton dared hope for, or deemed practicable; and that his political creed sternly excluded the populace, and indeed the majority of the population, from all pretensions to political power. If the manifest bad intention would constitute this publication a seditious libel, a good intention equally manifest cannot justly be denied its share of influence in producing a contrary verdict.

Here then is the difficulty. From the very nature of a libel it is impossible so to define it, but that the most meritorious works will be found included in the descrip-

tion. Not from any defect or undue severity in the particular law, but from the very nature of the offence to be guarded against, a work recommending reform by the only rational mode of recommendation, that is, by the detection and exposure of corruption, abuse, or incapacity, might, though it should breathe the best and most unadulterated English feelings, be brought within the definition of libel equally with the vilest incendiary pamphlet, that ever aimed at leading and misleading the multitude. Not a paragraph in the *Morning Post* during the Peace of Amiens, (or rather the experimental truce so called,)—though to the immortal honour of the then editor, that newspaper was the chief secondary means of producing the unexampled national unanimity, with which the war was re-commenced and has since been continued,—not a paragraph warning the nation, as need was and most imperious duty commanded, of the perilous designs and unsleeping ambition of our neighbour, the mimic and caricaturist of Charlemagne, but was a punishable libel. The law of libel is a vast aviary, which encages the awakening cock and the geese whose alarm preserved the Capitol, no less than the babbling magpye and ominous screech-owl. And yet will we avoid this seeming injustice, we throw down all fence and bulwark of public decency and public opinion; political calumny will soon join hands with private slander; and every principle, every feeling, that binds the citizen to his country and the spirit to its Creator, will be undermined—not by reasoning, for from that there is no danger; but—by the mere habit of hearing them reviled and scoffed at with impunity. Were we to contemplate the evils of a rank and unweeded press only in its effect on the manners of a people, and on the general tone of thought and conversation, the greater the love which we

bore to literature and to all the means and instruments of human improvement, the greater would be the earnestness with which we should solicit the interference of law: the more anxiously should we wish for some Ithuriel spear, that might remove from the ear of the public, and expose in their own fiendish shape, those reptiles, which inspiring venom and forging illusions as they list,

—————thence raise
At least distempered, discontented, thoughts,
Vain hopes, vain aims, inordinate desires.

PARADISE LOST.

ESSAY XII.

Quomodo autem id futurum sit, ne quis incredibile arbitretur, ostendam. Imprimis multiplicabitur regnum, et summa rerum potestas per plurimos dissipata et concina minuetur. Tunc discordiæ civiles in perpetuum screntur, nec ulla requies bellis exitiâlibus erit, donec reges decem pariter existant qui orbem terrarum, non ad regendum, sed ad consumendum, partiantur. Ili exercitibus in immensum coactis, et agrorum cultibus destitutis, quod est principium erectionis et cladis, disperdent omnia, et commineant, et vorabunt. Tum repente adversus eos hostis potentissimus ab extremis finibus plaga septentrionalis orietur, qui tribus ex eo numero deletis qui tunc Asiam obtinebunt, assumetur in societatem a cæteris, ac princeps omnium constituetur. Ille inausculabili dominatione rexabit orbem; dirina et humana miscet; infanda dicta et execrabilia molietur; nova consilia in pectore suo volutabit, ut proprium sibi constituant imperium; leges commutabit, suas sanciet; contaminabit, diripiet, spoliabit, occidet. Denique immutato nomine, atque imperii sede translata, confusio ac perturbatio humani generis consequetur. Tum vere detestabile, atque abominandum tempus existet, quo nulli hominum sit vita jucunda.—
LACTANTIUS de Vitâ Beatâ, Lib. vii. c. 16.

But lest this should be deemed incredible, I will show the manner in which it is to take place. First, there will be a multiplication of independent sovereignties, and the supreme magistracy of the empire, scattered and cut up into fragments, will be enfeebled in the exercise of power by law and authority. Then will be sown the seeds of civil discord, nor will there be any rest or pause to wasteful and ruinous wars; while the soldiery kept together in immense standing armies, the kings will crush and lay waste at their will;—until at length there will rise up against them a most puissant military chieftain of low birth, who will have conceded to him a fellowship with the other sovereigns of the earth, and will finally be constituted the head of all. This man will harass the civilized world with an insupportable despotism, he will confound and commix all things spiritual and temporal. He will form plans and preparations of the most execrable and sacrilegious nature. He will be for ever restlessly turning over new schemes in his imagination, in order that he may fix the imperial power over all in his own name and possession. He will change the former laws, he will sanction a code of his own, he will contaminate, pillage, lay waste and

massacre. At length, when he has succeeded in the change of names and titles, and in the transfer of the seat of empire, there will follow a confusion and perturbation of the human race; then will there be for a while an era of horror and abomination, during which no man will enjoy his life in quietness.*

INTERPOSE this essay as an historical comment on the words "mimic and caricaturist of Charlemagne," as applied to the despot, whom since the time that the words were first printed, we have, thank Heaven! succeeded in encaging. The motto contains one of the most striking instances of an uninspired prophecy fulfilled even in many of its *minutiae*, that I recollect ever to have met with: and it is hoped, that as a curiosity it will reconcile my readers to its unusual length. But though my chief motive was that of relieving, by the variety of an historical parallel, the series of argument on this most important of all subjects, the communicability of truth, yet the essay is far from being a digression. Having giving utterance to *quicquid in rem tam maleficam indignatio dolorque dictarent*, concerning the mischiefs of a lawless press, I held it an act of justice to give a portrait no less lively of the excess to which the remorseless ambition of a government might go in accumulating its oppressions in the one instance before the discovery of printing, and in the other during the suppression of its freedom.

I have translated the following from a voluminous German work, Michael Ignaz Schmidt's History of the Germans, from Charles the Great to Conrade I.; in which this extract forms the conclusion of the second chapter of the third book. The late tyrant's close imitation of Charlemagne was sufficiently evidenced by his assumption

* This translation has expressions referring to some words inserted by the author in the Latin quotation in the previous editions.—Ed.

of the iron crown of Italy, by his imperial coronation with the presence and authority of the Holy Father, by his imperial robe embroidered with bees in order to mark him as a successor of Pepin, and even by his ostentatious revocation of Charlemagne's grants to the Bishop of Rome. But that the differences might be felt likewise, I have prefaced the translation with the few following observations.

Let it be remembered then, that Charlemagne, for the greater part, created for himself the means of which he availed himself; that his very education was his own work, and that unlike Peter the Great, he could find no assistants out of his own realm; that the unconquerable courage and heroic dispositions of the nations he conquered, supplied a proof positive of real superiority, indeed the sole positive proof of intellectual power, in a warrior: for how can we measure force but by the resistance to it? But all was prepared for Buonaparte; Europe weakened in the very heart of all human strength, namely, in moral and religious principle, and at the same time accidentally destitute of any one great or commanding mind: the French people, on the other hand, still restless from revolutionary fanaticism; their civic enthusiasm already passed into military passion and the ambition of conquest; and alike by disgust, terror, and characteristic unfitness for freedom, ripe for the reception of a despotism. Add too, that the main obstacles to an unlimited system of conquest, and the pursuit of universal monarchy, had been cleared away for him by his pioneers the Jacobins, namely, the influence of the great land-holders, of the privileged and of the commercial classes. Even the naval successes of Great Britain, by destroying the trade, rendering useless the colonies, and almost annihilating the navy of France,

were in some respects subservient to his designs, by concentrating the powers of the French empire in its armies, and supplying them out of the wrecks of all other employments, save that of agriculture. France had already approximated to the formidable state so prophetically described by Sir James Steuart, in his Political Economy, in which the population should consist chiefly of soldiers and peasantry: at least the interests of no other classes were regarded. The great merit of Buonaparte has been that of a skilful steersman, who with his boat in the most violent storm still keeps himself on the summit of the waves, which not he, but the winds had raised. I will now proceed to my translation.

"That Charles was a hero, his exploits bear evidence. The subjugation of the Lombards, protected as they were by the Alps, by fortresses and fortified towns, by numerous armies, and by a great name; of the Saxons, secured by their savage resoluteness, by an untameable love of freedom, by their desert plains and enormous forests, and by their own poverty; the humbling of the Dukes of Bavaria, Aquitania, Bretagne, and Gascony, proud of their ancestry as well as of their ample domains; the almost entire extirpation of the Avars, so long the terror of Europe; are assuredly works which demanded a courage and a firmness of mind such as Charles only possessed.

"How great his reputation was, and this too beyond the limits of Europe, is proved by the embassies sent to him out of Persia, Palestine, Mauritania, and even from the Khalifs of Bagdad. If at the present day an embassy from the Black or Caspian Sea comes to a prince on the Baltic, it is not to be wondered at, since such are now the political relations of the four quarters of the world, that a blow which is given to any one of

them is felt more or less by all the others. Whereas in the times of Charlemagne, the inhabitants in one of the known parts of the world scarcely knew what was going on in the rest. Nothing but the extraordinary, all-piercing, report of Charles's exploits could bring this to pass. His greatness, which set the world in astonishment, was likewise, without doubt, that which begot in the Pope and the Romans the first idea of the re-establishment of their empire.

"It is true, that a number of things united to make Charles a great man—favourable circumstances of time, a nation already disciplined to warlike habits, a long life, and the consequent acquisition of experience, such as no one possessed in his whole realm. Still, however, the principal means of his greatness Charles found in himself. His great mind was capable of extending its attention to the greatest multiplicity of affairs. In the middle of Saxony he thought on Italy and Spain, and at Rome he made provisions for Saxony, Bavaria, and Pannonia. He gave audience to the ambassadors of the Greek emperor and other potentates, and himself audited the accounts of his own farms, where everything was entered even to the number of the eggs. Busy as his mind was, his body was not less in one continued state of motion. Charles would see into every thing himself, and do every thing himself, as far as his powers extended; and even this it was, too, which gave to his undertakings such force and energy.

"But with all this the government of Charles was the government of a conqueror, that is, splendid abroad and fearfully oppressive at home. What a grievance must it not have been for the people, that Charles for forty years together dragged them now to the Elbe, then to the Ebro, after this to the Po, and from thence back again

to the Elbe, and this not to check an invading enemy, but to make conquests which little profited the French nation! This must prove too much, at length, for a hired soldier: how much more for conscripts, who did not live only to fight, but who were fathers of families, citizens, and proprietors? But above all, it is to be wondered at, that a nation, like the French, should suffer themselves to be used as Charles used them. But the people no longer possessed any considerable share of influence. All depended on the great chieftains, who gave their willing suffrage for endless wars, by which they were always sure to win. They found the best opportunity, under such circumstances, to make themselves great and mighty at the expense of the freemen resident within the circle of their baronial courts; and when conquests were made, it was far more for their advantage than that of the monarchy. In the conquered provinces there was a necessity for dukes, vassal kings, and different high offices: all this fell to their share.

"I would not say this if we did not possess incontrovertible original documents of those times, which prove clearly to us that Charles's government was an unhappy one for the people, and that this great man, by his actions, laboured to the direct subversion of his first principles. It was his first pretext to establish a greater equality among the members of his vast community, and to make all free and equal subjects under a common sovereign. And from the necessity occasioned by continual war the exact contrary took place. Nothing gives us a better notion of the interior state of the French monarchy, than the third capitular of the year 811.*

* Compare with this the four or five quarto volumes of the French Conscript Code.

All is full of complaint, the bishops and earls clamouring against the freeholders, and these in their turn against the bishops and earls. And in truth the freeholders had no small reason to be discontented and to resist, as far as they dared, even the imperial levies. A dependent must be content to follow his lord without further questioning: for he was paid for it. But a free citizen, who lived wholly on his own property, might reasonably object to suffer himself to be dragged about in all quarters of the world, at the fancies of his lord: especially as there was so much injustice intermixed. Those who gave up their properties entirely, or in part, of their own accord, were left undisturbed at home, while those who refused to do this, were forced so often into service, that at length, becoming impoverished, they were compelled by want to give up, or dispose of, their free tenures to the bishops or earls.*

"It almost surpasses belief to what a height, at length, the aversion to war rose in the French nation, from the multitude of the campaigns and the grievances connected with them. The national vanity was now satiated by the frequency of victories: and the plunder which fell to the lot of individuals, made but a poor compensation for the losses and burthens sustained by their families at home. Some, in order to become exempt from military service, sought for menial employments in the establishments of the bishops, abbots, abbesses, and earls. Others made over their free property to become tenants at will of such lords as, from their age or other circumstances, they thought would be called to no further military services. Others even privately took away the life of

* It would require no great ingenuity to discover parallels, or, at least, equivalent hardships to these, in the treatment of, and regulations concerning, the reluctant conscripts.

their mothers, aunts, or other of their relatives, in order that no family residents might remain through whom their names might be known, and themselves traced; others voluntarily made slaves of themselves, in order thus to render themselves incapable of the military rank."

When this extract was first published, namely, September 7, 1809, I prefixed the following sentence. "This passage contains so much matter for political anticipation and well-grounded hope, that I feel no apprehension of the reader's being dissatisfied with its length." I trust, that I may now derive the same confidence from his genial exultation, as a Christian, and from his honest pride as a Briton, in the retrospect of its completion. In this belief I venture to conclude the essay with the following extract from a "Comparison of the French republic, under Buonaparte, with the Roman empire under the first Caesars," published by me in the Morning Post, 21 Sept. 1802.

If, then, there be no counterpoise of dissimilar circumstances, the prospect is gloomy indeed. The commencement of the public slavery in Rome was in the most splendid era of human genius. Any unusually flourishing period of the arts and sciences in any country is, even to this day, called the Augustan age of that country. The Roman poets, the Roman historians, the Roman orators, rivalled those of Greece; in military tactics, in machinery, in all the conveniences of private life, the Romans greatly surpassed the Greeks. With few exceptions, all the emperors, even the worst of them, were, like Buonaparte,* the liberal encouragers of all great public

* Imitators succeed better in copying the vices than the excellences of their archetypes. Where shall we find in the First Consul of France

works, and of every species of public merit not connected with the assertion of political freedom :

——— *O juvenes, circumspicit atque agitat vos,
Materiamque sibi Ducis indulgentia quarit.**

It is even so, at this present moment, in France. Yet, both in France and in Rome, we have learned, that the most abject dispositions to slavery rapidly trod on the heels of the most outrageous fanaticism for an almost anarchical liberty. *Ruere in servilium consules, patres, eques: quanto quis illustrior, tanto magis falsi ac festinantes.*† Peace and the condonation of all the civilized provinces of the earth were the grand and plausible pretexes of Roman despotism: the degeneracy of the human species itself, in all the nations so blended, was the melancholy effect. To-morrow, therefore, we shall endeavour to detect all those points and circumstances of dissimilarity, which, though they cannot impeach the rectitude of the parallel, for the present,

a counterpart to the generous and dreadful clemency of the first Cæsar! *Acerbe loquentibus satis habuit pro concione denunciare, ne percreverent. Aulicus Cæcina crinosissimo libro, et Pitholai carminibus maledicentissimis laceratam existimationem suam civili animo tulit.*—(Sueton. I. 75.—Ed.)

It deserves translation for English readers. "To those who spoke bitterly against him, he held it sufficient to signify publicly, that they should not persevere in the use of such language. His character had been mangled in a most libellous work of Aulus Cæcina, and he had been grossly lampooned in some verses by Pitholaus; but he bore both with the temper of a good citizen."

For this part of the First Consul's character, if common report speaks the truth, we must seek a parallel in the dispositions of the third Cæsar, who dreaded the pen of a paragraph writer, hinting aught against his morals and measures, with as great anxiety, and with as vindictive feelings, as if it had been the dagger of an assassin lifted up against his life. From the third Cæsar, too, he adopted the abrogation of all popular elections.

* *Juvenal. Sat. vii. 20.*—Ed.

† *Tacit. Ann. i. 7.*—Ed.

may yet render it probable, that as the same constitution of government has been built up in France with incomparably greater rapidity, so it may have an incomparably shorter duration. We are not conscious of any feelings of bitterness towards the First Consul; or, if any, only that venial prejudice, which naturally results from the having hoped proudly of an individual, and the having been miserably disappointed. But we will not voluntarily cease to think freely and speak openly. We owe grateful hearts and uplifted hands of thanksgiving to the Divine Providence, that there is yet one European country—and that country our own—in which the actions of public men may be boldly analyzed, and the result publicly stated. And let the Chief Consul, who professes in all things to follow his fate, learn to submit to it, if he finds that it is still his fate to struggle with the spirit of English freedom, and the virtues which are the offspring of that spirit;—if he finds, that the genius of Great Britain, which blew up his Egyptian navy into the air, and blighted his Syrian laurels, still follows him with a calm and dreadful eye; and in peace, equally as in war, still watches for that liberty, in which alone the genius of our isle lives, and moves, and has its being; and which being lost, all our commercial and naval greatness would instantly languish, like a flower, the root of which had been silently eaten away by a worm; and without which, in any country, the public festivals, and pompous merriments of a nation present no other spectacle to the eye of Reason, than a mob of maniacs dancing in their fetters.

ESSAY XIII.

MUST there be still some discord mix'd among
The harmony of men, whose mood accords
Beat with contention tun'd to notes of wrong ?
That when war fails, peace must make war with words,
With words unto destruction arm'd more strong
Than ever were our foreign foemen's swords ;
Making as deep, tho' not yet bleeding wounds !
What war left scarless, calumny confounds.

Truth lies entrapp'd where cunning finds no bar ;
Since no proportion can there be betwixt
Our actions which in endless motions are,
And ordinances which are always fixt.
Ten thousand laws more cannot reach so far,
But malice goes beyond, or lives commixt
So close with goodness, that it ever will
Corrupt, disguise, or counterfeit it still.

And therefore *would our glorious Alfred, who*
Join'd with the king's the good man's majesty,
Not leave law's labyrinth without a clue—
Gave to deep skill its just authority,—

But the last judgment—this his jury's plan—
*Left to the natural sense of work-day man.**

[RECUR to the dilemma stated in the eighth essay.
How shall we solve this problem ? Its solution is to be
found in that spirit which, like the universal *menstruum*
sought for by the old alchemists, can blend and harmonize
the most discordant elements ;—it is to be found in the

Daniel. Epistle to Sir Thomas Egerton. The lines in italics are
substituted by the author for the original, and there are a few other
small alterations. — *Ed.*

spirit of a rational freedom diffused and become national, in the consequent influence and controul of public opinion, and in its most precious organ, the jury. It is to be found, wherever juries are sufficiently enlightened to perceive the difference, and to comprehend the origin and necessity of the difference, between libels and other criminal overt-acts, and are sufficiently independent to act upon the conviction, that in a charge of libel, the degree, the circumstances, and the intention, constitute—not merely modify—the offence, give it its being, and determine its legal name. The words maliciously and advisedly, must here have a force of their own, and a proof of their own. They will consequently consider the law as a blank power provided for the punishment of the offender, not as a light by which they are to determine and discriminate the offence. The understanding and conscience of the jury are the judges, *in toto*: the law a blank *congé d'élire*. The law is the clay and those the potter's wheel. Shame fall on that man, who shall labour to confound what reason and nature have put asunder, and who at once, as far as in him lies, would render the press ineffectual and the law odious; who would lock up the main river, the Thames, of our intellectual commerce; would throw a bar across the stream, that must render its navigation dangerous or partial, using as his materials the very banks, which were intended to deepen its channel and guard against its inundations! Shame fall on him, and a participation of the infamy of those, who misled an English jury to the murder of Algernon Sidney.

But though the virtuous intention of the writer must be allowed a certain influence in facilitating his acquittal, the degree of his moral guilt is not the true index or mete-wand of his condemnation. For juries do not sit

in a court of conscience, but of law; they are not the representatives of religion, but the guardians of external tranquillity. The leading principle, the pole star, of the judgment in its decision concerning the libellous nature of a published writing, is its more or less remote connection with after overt-acts, as the cause or occasion of the same. Thus the publication of actual facts may be, and most often will be, criminal and libellous, when directed against private characters: not only because the charge will reach the minds of many who cannot be competent judges of the truth or falsehood of facts to which themselves were not witnesses, against a man whom they do not know, or at best know imperfectly; but because such a publication is of itself a very serious overt-act, by which the author without authority and without trial, has inflicted punishment on a fellow-subject, himself being witness and jury, judge and executioner. Of such publications there can be no legal justification, though the wrong may be palliated by the circumstance that the injurious charges are not only true, but wholly out of the reach of the law. But in libels on the government there are two things to be balanced against each other: first, the incomparably greater mischief of the overt-acts, if we suppose them actually occasioned by the libel—(as for instance, the subversion of government and property, if the principles taught by Thomas Paine had been realized, or if even an attempt had been made to realize them, by the many thousands of his readers); and second, the very great improbability that such effects will be produced by such writings. Government concerns all generally, and no one in particular. The facts are commonly as well known to the readers, as to the writer: and falsehood therefore easily detected. It is proved, likewise, by

experience, that the frequency of open political discussion, with all its blamable indiscretions, indisposes a nation to overt-acts of practical sedition or conspiracy. They talk ill, said Charles V. of his Belgian provinces, but they suffer so much the better for it. His successor thought differently : he determined to be master of their words and opinions, as well as of their actions, and in consequence lost one half of those provinces, and retained the other half at an expense of strength and treasure greater than the original worth of the whole. An enlightened jury, therefore, will require proofs of more than ordinary malignity of intention, as furnished by the style, price, mode of circulation, and so forth ; or of punishable indiscretion arising out of the state of the times, as of dearth, for instance, or of whatever other calamity is likely to render the lower classes turbulent, and apt to be alienated from the government of their country. For the absence of a right disposition of mind must be considered, both in law and in morals, as nearly equivalent to the presence of a wrong disposition. Under such circumstances the legal paradox, that a libel may be the more a libel for being true, becomes strictly just, and as such ought to be acted upon.

Concerning the right of punishing by law the authors of heretical or deistical writings, I reserve my remarks for a future essay, in which I hope to state the grounds and limits of toleration more accurately than they seem to me to have been hitherto traced. There is one maxim, however, which I am tempted to seize as it passes across me. If I may trust my own memory, it is indeed a very old truth : and yet if the fashion of acting in apparent ignorance thereof be any presumption of its novelty, it ought to be new, or at least have become so by courtesy of oblivion. It is this : that as far as human practice

can realize the sharp limits and exclusive proprieties of science, law and religion should be kept distinct. There is, in strictness, no proper opposition but between the two polar forces of one and the same power.* If I say then, that law and religion are natural opposites, and that the latter is the requisite counterpoise of the former, let it not be interpreted, as if I had declared them to be contraries. The law has rightfully invested the creditor with the power of arresting and imprisoning an insolvent debtor, the farmer with the power of transporting, mediately at least, the pillagers of his hedges and copees; but the law does not compel him to exercise that power, while it will often happen that religion commands him to forego it. Nay, so well was this understood by our grandfathers, that a man who squares his conscience by the law was a common paraphrase or synonyme of a wretch without any conscience at all. We have all of us learnt from history, that there was a long and dark period, during which the powers and the aims of law

* Every power in nature and in spirit must evolve an opposite as the sole means and condition of its manifestation: and all opposition is a tendency to re-union. This is the universal law of polarity or essential dualism, first promulgated by Heraclitus, 2000 years afterwards re-published, and made the foundation both of logic, of physics, and of metaphysics by Giordano Bruno. The principle may be thus expressed. The identity of *thesis* and *antithesis* is the substance of all being; their opposition the condition of all existence or being manifested; and every thing or *phenomenon* is the exponent of a *synthesis* as long as the opposite energies are retained in that *synthesis*. Thus water is neither oxygen nor hydrogen, nor yet is it a commixture of both; but the *synthesis* or indifference of the two: and as long as the *copula* endures, by which it becomes water, or rather which alone is water, it is not less a simple body than either of the imaginary elements, improperly called its ingredients or components. It is the object of the mechanical atomistic philosophy to confound *synthesis* with *synartesis*, or rather with mere juxtaposition of corpuscles separated by invisible interspaces. I find it difficult to determine, whether this theory contradicts the reason or the senses most: for it is alike inconceivable and unimaginable.

were usurped in the name of religion by the clergy and the courts spiritual : and we all know the result. Law and religion thus interpenetrating neutralized each other ; and the baleful product, or *tertium aliquid*, of this union retarded the civilization of Europe for centuries. Law splintered into the *minutiae* of religion, the awful function and prerogative of which it is to take account of every *idle word*, became a busy and inquisitorial tyranny : and religion substituting legal terrors for the ennobling influences of conscience remained religion in name only. The present age appears to me approaching fast to a similar usurpation of the functions of religion by law : and if it were required, I should not want strong presumptive proofs in favour of this opinion, whether I sought for them in the charges from the bench concerning wrongs, to which religion denounces the fearful penalties of guilt, but for which the law of the land assigns damages only : or in sundry statutes—and all praise to the late Mr. Wyndham, *Romanorum ultimo*—in a still greater number of attempts towards new statutes, the authors of which displayed the most pitiable ignorance, not merely of the distinction between perfect and imperfect obligations, but even of that still more sacred distinction between things and persons. What the son of Sirach advises concerning the soul, every senator should apply to his legislative capacity :—reverence it in meekness, knowing how feeble and how mighty a thing it is ! *

From this hint concerning toleration, we may pass by an easy transition to the, perhaps, still more interesting subject of tolerance. And here I fully coincide with

* The reference, probably, is to Ecclus. x. 28. *My son, glorify thy soul in meekness, and give it honour according to the dignity thereof.*—Ed.

Frederic II. Jacobi, that the only true spirit of toleranco consists in our conscientious toleration of each other's intolerance. Whatever pretends to be more than this, is either the unthinking cant of fashion, or the soul-palsying narcotic of moral and religious indifference. All of us without exception, in the same mode though not in the same degree, are necessarily subjected to the risk of mistaking positive opinions for certainty and clear insight. From this yoke we cannot free ourselves, but by ceasing to be men; and this too not in order to transcend, but to sink below, our human nature. For if in one point of view it be the muleet of our fall, and of the corruption of our will; it is equally true, that contemplated from another point, it is the price and consequence of our progressiveness. To him who is compelled to pace to and fro within the high walls and in the narrow court-yard of a prison, all objects may appear clear and distinct. It is the traveller journeying onward, full of heart and hope, with an ever-varying horizon, on the boundless plain, who is liable to mistake clouds for mountains, and the *mirage* of drouth for an expanse of refreshing waters.

But notwithstanding this deep conviction of our general fallibility, and the most vivid recollection of my own, I dare avow with the German philosopher, that as far as opinions, and not motives, principles, and not men,—are concerned; I neither am tolerant, nor wish to be regarded as such. According to my judgment, it is mere ostentation, or a poor trick that hypocrisy plays with the cards of nonsense, when a man makes protestation of being perfectly tolerant in respect of all principles, opinions, and persuasions, those alone excepted which render the holders intolerant. For he either means to say by this, that he is utterly indifferent towards all

truth, and finds nothing so insufferable as the persuasion of there being any such mighty value or importance attached to the possession of the truth as should give a marked preference to any one conviction above any other; or else he means nothing, and amuses himself with articulating the pulses of the air instead of inhaling it in the more healthful and profitable exercise of yawning. That which doth not withstand, hath itself no standing place. To fill a station is to exclude or repel others,—and this is not less the definition of moral, than of material, solidity. We live by continued acts of defence, that involve a sort of offensive warfare. But a man's principles, on which he grounds his hope and his faith, are the life of his life. *We live by faith*, says the philosophic Apostle; and faith without principles is but a flattering phrase for wilful positiveness, or fanatical bodily sensation. Well, and of good right therefore, do we maintain with more zeal, than we should defend body or estate, a deep and inward conviction, which is as the moon to us; and like the moon with all its massy shadows and deceptive gleams, it yet lights us on our way, poor travellers as we are, and benighted pilgrims. With all its spots and changes and temporary eclipses, with all its vain halos and bedimming vapours, it yet reflects the light that is to rise on us, which even now is rising, though intercepted from our immediate view by the mountains that inclose and frown over the vale of our mortal life.

This again is the mystery and the dignity of our human nature, that we cannot give up our reason, without giving up at the same time our individual personality. For that must appear to each man to be his reason which produces in him the highest sense of certainty; and yet it is not reason, except so far as it is of universal validity

and obligatory on all mankind. There is one heart for the whole mighty mass of humanity, and every pulse in each particular vessel strives to beat in concert with it. He who asserts that truth is of no importance except in the signification of sincerity, confounds sense with madness, and the word of God with a dream. If the power of reasoning be the gift of the supreme Reason, that we be sedulous, yea, and militant in the endeavour to reason aright, is his implied exhortation. But what is of permanent and essential interest to one man must needs be so to all, in proportion to the means and opportunities of each. Woe to him by whom these are neglected, and double woe to him by whom they are withholden; for he robs at once himself and his neighbour. That man's soul is not dear to himself, to whom the souls of his brethren are not dear. As far as they can be influenced by him, they are parts and properties of his own soul, their faith his faith, their errors his burthen, their righteousness and bliss his righteousness and his reward—and of their guilt and misery his own will be the echo. As much as I love my fellow-men, so much and no more will I be intolerant of their heresies and unbelief—and I will honour and hold forth the right hand of fellowship to every individual who is equally intolerant of that which he conceives such in me.—We will both exclaim—‘I know not what antidotes among the complex views, impulses and circumstances, that form your moral being, God's gracious providence may have vouchsafed to you against the serpent fang of this error,—but it is a viper, and its poison deadly, although through higher influences some men may take the reptile to their bosom, and remain unstung.’

In one of those poisonous journals, which deal out profaneness, hate, fury, and sedition through the land, I

Col. an ass

read the following paragraph. "The Brahmin believes that every man will be saved in his own persuasion, and that all religions are equally pleasing to the God of all. The Christian confines salvation to the believer in his own Vedas and Shasters. Which is the more humane and philosophic creed of the two?" Let question answer question. Self-complacent scoffer! Whom meanest thou by God? The God of truth?—and can He be pleased with falsehood, and the debasement or utter suspension of the reason which he gave to man that he might receive from him the sacrifice of truth? Or the God of love and mercy?—and can he be pleased with the blood of thousands poured out under the wheels of Jaggernaut, or with the shrieks of children offered up as fire offerings to Baal or to Moloch?—Or dost thou mean the God of holiness and infinite purity?—and can He be pleased with abominations unutterable and more than brutal defilements—and equally pleased too as with that religion, which commands us that we have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but to reprove them;—with that religion, which strikes the fear of the Most High so deeply, and the sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin so inwardly, that the believer anxiously inquires: *Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?*—and which makes answer to him,—*He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?** But I check myself. It is at once folly and profanation of truth, to reason with the man who can place before his eyes a minister of the Gospel directing the eye of the widow from the corpse of her husband

* Micah vi. 7, 8.—Ed.

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ESSAY XIV.

Knowing the heart of man is set to be
The centre of this world, about the which
These revolutions of disturbances
Still roll ; where all the aspects of misery
Predominate ; whose strong effects are such,
As he must bear, being powerless to redress :
And that unless above himself he can
Erect himself, how poor a thing is man !

DANIEL.*

I HAVE thus endeavoured, with an anxiety which may perhaps have misled me into prolixity, to detail and ground the conditions under which the communication of truth is commanded or forbidden to us as individuals, by our conscience ; and those too, under which it is permissible by the law which controuls our conduct as members of the state. But is the subject of sufficient importance to deserve so minute an examination ? O that my readers would look round the world, as it now is, and make to themselves a faithful catalogue of its many miseries ! From what do these proceed, and on what do they depend for their continuance ? Assuredly, for the greater part, on the actions of men, and those again on the want of a vital principle of action. *We live by faith.* The essence of virtue consists in the principle. And the reality of this, as well as its importance, is believed by all men in fact, few as there may be who bring the truth

* Epistle to the Countess of Cumberland.—Ed.

forward into men feel, and true cause of that at some admits that curious art with himself throw off the nature, his mind of his will, nature. Hence, for the honest I am! or at base and unworthy motives I act! we may hear a hundred times, what a fool I am! curse on my folly! and the like.*

Yet even this implies an obscure sentiment, that with clearer conceptions in the understanding, the principle of action would become purer in the will. Thanks to the image of our Maker not wholly obliterated from any human soul, we dare not purchase an exemption from guilt by an excuse, which would place our melioration out of our own power. Thus the very man, who will abuse himself for a fool but not for a villain, would rather, spite of the usual professions to the contrary, be condemned as a rogue by other men, than be acquitted as a blockhead. But be this as it may, in and out of himself, however, he sees plainly the true cause of our common complaints. Doubtless, there seem many physical causes of distress, of disease, of poverty and of desolation — tempests, earthquakes, volcanos, wild or

* I do not consider as exceptions the thousands that abuse themselves by rote with lip-penitence, or the wild ravings of fanaticism: for these persons at the very time they speak so vehemently of the wickedness and rottenness of their hearts, are then commonly the warmest in their own good opinion, covered round and comfortable in the wrap-rascal of self-hypocrisy.

venomous animals, barren soils, uncertain or tyrannous climates, pestilential swamps, and death in the very air we breathe. Yet when do we hear the general wretchedness of mankind attributed to these? Even in the most awful of the Icelandic and Sicilian eruptions, when the earth has opened and sent forth vast rivers of fire, and the smoke and vapour have dimmed the light of heaven for months, how small has been the comparative injury to the human race;—and how much even of this injury might be fairly attributed to combined imprudence and superstition! Natural calamities that do indeed spread devastation wide, (for instance, the marsh fever,) are almost without exception, voices of nature in her all-intelligible language—do this! or cease to do that! By the mere absence of one superstition, and of the sloth engendered by it, the plague would probably cease to exist throughout Asia and Africa. Pronounce meditatively the name of Jenner, and ask what might we not hope, what need we deem unattainable, if all the time, the effort, the skill, which we waste in making ourselves miserable through vice, and vicious through misery, were embodied and marshalled to a systematic war against the existing evils of nature! No, it is a wicked world! This is so generally the solution, that this very wickedness is assigned by selfish men, as their excuse for doing nothing to render it better, and for opposing those who would make the attempt. What have not Clarkson, Granville Sharp, Wilberforce, and the Society of the Friends, effected for the honour, and if we believe in a retributive Providence, for the continuance of the prosperity, of the English nation, imperfectly as the intellectual and moral faculties of the people at large are developed at present! What may not be effected, if the recent discovery of the means of educating nations (freed,

however, from the various sophistications and mutilations of ignorant mountebanks,) shall have been applied to its full extent! Would I frame to myself the most inspiring representation of future bliss, which my mind is capable of comprehending, it would be embodied to me in the idea of Bell receiving, at some distant period, the appropriate reward of his earthly labours:—thousands and ten thousands of glorified spirits, whose reason and conscience had, through his efforts, been unfolded, shall sing the song of their own redemption, bearing forth praises to God and to their Saviour, shall repeat his *new name* in heaven, give thanks for his earthly virtues, as the chosen instruments of divine mercy to themselves, and not seldom perhaps turn their eyes toward him, as from the sun to its image in the fountain, with secondary gratitude and the permitted utterance of a human love! Were but a hundred men to combine a deep conviction that virtuous habits may be formed by the very means by which knowledge is communicated, that men may be made better, not only in consequence, but by the mode, and in the process, of instruction;—were but a hundred men to combine that clear conviction of this, which I myself at this moment feel, even as I feel the certainty of my being, with the perseverance of a Clarkson or a Bell, the promises of ancient prophecy would disclose themselves to our faith, even as when a noble castle hidden from us by an intervening mist, discovers itself by its reflection in the tranquil lake, on the opposite shore of which we stand gazing.* What an awful duty, what a nurse of all other, the fairest virtues, does not hope become! We are bad ourselves, because we despair of the goodness of others.

* This is, I fear, too complex, too accidental an image to be conveyed by words to those, who have not seen it themselves in nature. 1830.

If then it be a truth, attested alike by common feeling and common sense, that the greater part of human misery depends directly on human vices and the remainder indirectly, by what means can we act on men so as to remove or preclude these vices and purify their principle of moral election? The question is not by what means each man is to alter his own character—in order to this, all the means prescribed and all the aidances given by religion, may be necessary for him. Vain, of themselves, may be

————— the sayings of the wise
 In ancient and in modern books inrolled

 Unless he feel within
 Some source of consolation from above,
 Secret refreshings, that repair his strength
 And fainting spirits uphold.*

This is not the question. Virtue would not be virtue, could it be given by one fellow-creature to another. To make use of all the means and appliances in our power to the actual attainment of rectitude, is the abstract of the duty which we owe to ourselves: to supply those means as far as we can, comprizes our duty to others. The question then is, what are these means? Can they be any other than the communication of knowledge, and the removal of those evils and impediments which prevent its reception? It may not be in our power to combine both, but it is in the power of every man to contribute to the former, who is sufficiently informed to feel that it is his duty. If it be said, that we should endeavour not so much to remove ignorance, as to make the ignorant religious;—religion herself, through her sacred oracles, answers for me, that all effective faith

* Samson Agonistes.

pre-supposes knowledge and individual conviction. If the mere acquiescence in truth, uncomprehended and unfathomed, were sufficient, few indeed would be the vicious and the miserable, in this country at least, where speculative infidelity is, God be praised! confined to a small number. Like bodily deformity, there is one instance here and another there; but three in one place are already an undue proportion. It is highly worthy of observation, that the inspired writings received by Christians are distinguishable from other books pretending to inspiration, from the scriptures of the Brahmins, and even from the Koran, by their strong and frequent recommendations of truth. It is not here meant veracity, which cannot but be enforced in every code which appeals to the religious principle of man; but knowledge. This is not only extolled as the crown and honour of a man, but to seek after it is again and again commanded us as one of our most sacred duties. Yea, the very perfection and final bliss of the glorified spirit is represented by the Apostle as a plain aspect, or intuitive beholding, of truth in its eternal and immutable source. Not that knowledge can of itself do all! The light of religion is not that of the moon, light without heat; but neither is its warmth that of the stove, warmth without light. Religion is the sun, the warmth of which indeed swells, and stirs, and actuates the life of nature, but who at the same time beholds all the growth of life with a master-eye, makes all objects glorious on which he looks, and by that glory visible to all others.

But though knowledge be not the only, yet that it is an indispensable and most effectual, agent in the direction of our actions, one consideration will convince us. It is an undoubted fact of human nature, that the sense of impossibility quenches all will. Sense of utter inaptitude

does the same. The man shuns the beautiful flame, which is eagerly grasped at by the infant. The sense of a disproportion of certain after-harm to present gratification produces effects almost equally uniform: though almost perishing with thirst, we should dash to the earth a goblet of wine in which we had seen a poison infused, though the poison were without taste or odour, or even added to the pleasures of both. Are not all our vices equally inapt to the universal end of human actions, the satisfaction of the agent? Are not their pleasures equally disproportionate to the after-harm? Yet many a maiden, who will not grasp at the fire, will yet purchase a wreath of diamonds at the price of her health, her honour, nay, and she herself knows it at the moment of her choice,—at the sacrifice of her peace and happiness. The son would reject the poisoned cup, yet the trembling hand with which he raises his daily or hourly draught to his lips, has not left him ignorant that this too is altogether a poison. I know it will be objected, that the consequences foreseen are less immediate; that they are diffused over a larger space of time; and that the slave of vice hopes where no hope is. This, however, only removes the question one step further: for why should the distance or diffusion of known consequences produce so great a difference? Why are men the dupes of the present moment? Evidently because the conceptions are indistinct in the one case, and vivid in the other; because all confused conceptions render us restless; and because restlessness can drive us to vices that promise no enjoyment, no not even the cessation of that restlessness. This is indeed the dread punishment attached by nature to habitual vice, that its impulses wax as its motives wane. No object, not even the light of a solitary taper in the far distance, tempts the benighted mind

from before ; own restlessness dogs it from behind,
 as with the ir of destiny. What then is or can
 be the preve e remedy, the counteraction, but the
 habituation tellect to clear, distinct, and adequate
 conceptions ing all things that are the possible
 objects of ele ception, and thus to reserve the deep
 feelings which long, as by a natural right to those
 obscure ideas * that are necessary to the moral perfection
 of the human being, notwithstanding, ye even in con-
 sequence, of their obscurity—to reserve these feelings, I
 repeat, for objects, which their very su imity renders
 indefinite, no less than their indefiniteness renders them
 sublime,—namely, to the ideas of being, form, life, the
 reason, the law of conscience, freedom, immortality, God ?
 To connect with the objects of our senses the obscure
 notions and consequent vivid feelings, which are due
 only to immaterial and permanent things, is profanation
 relatively to the heart, and superstition in the under-
 standing. It is in this sense that the philosophic Apostle
 calls covetousness idolatry. Could we emancipate our-
 selves from the bedimming influences of custom, and the
 transforming witchcraft of early associations, we should
 see as numerous tribes of *felisch*-worshippers in the streets
 of London and Paris, as we hear of on the coasts of
 Africa.

* I have not expressed myself as clearly as I could wish. But the truth of the assertion, that deep feeling has a tendency to combine with obscure ideas, in preference to distinct and clear notions, may be proved by the history of fanatics and fanaticism in all ages and countries. The *odium theologicum* is even proverbial : and it is the common complaint of philosophers and philosophic historians, that the passions of the disputants are commonly violent in proportion to the subtlety and obscurity of the questions in dispute. Nor is this fact confined to professional theologians : for whole nations have displayed the same agitations, and have sacrificed national policy to the more powerful interest of a controverted obscurity.

ESSAY XV.

A palace when 'tis that which it should be
Leaves growing, and stands such, or else decays ;
With him who dwells there, 'tis not so : for he
Should still urge upward, and his fortune raise.

Our bodies had their morning, have their noon,
And shall not better—*the next change is night ;*
But *their* far larger guest, t' whom sun and moon
Are sparks and short-lived, claims another right.

The noble soul by age grows lustier,
Her appetite and her digestion mend ;
We must not starve nor hope to pamper her
With woman's milk and pap unto the end.

Provide you manlier diet !

DONNE.*

I AM fully aware, that what I am writing and have written (in these latter essays at least) will expose me to the censure of some, as bewildering myself and readers with metaphysics ; to the ridicule of others as a school-boy declaimer on old and worn-out truisms or exploded fancies ; and to the objection of most as obscure. The last real or supposed defect has already received an answer both in the preceding essays, and in the appendix to my first Lay-Sermon, entitled *The Statesman's Manual*. Of the former two, I shall take the present opportunity of declaring my sentiments ; especially as I have already received a hint that my idol, Milton, has represented

* Letter to Sir Henry Goodere. The words in italics are substituted for the original.—Ed.

metaphysics as the subject which the bad spirits in hell delight in discussing. And truly, if I had exerted my subtlety and invention in persuading myself and others that we are but living machines, and that, as one of the late followers of Hobbes and Hartley has expressed the system, the assassin and his dagger are equally fit objects of moral esteem and abhorrence; or if with a writer of wider influence and higher authority, I had reduced all virtue to a selfish prudence eked out by superstition,*—for, assuredly, a creed which takes its moral point in conscious selfishness, whatever be the words or names that act on the selfish passion, a ghost or a constable, can have but a distant relationship to that religion, which places its essence in our loving our neighbour as ourselves, and God above all,—I know not, by what arguments I could repel the sarcasm. But what are my metaphysics?—Merely the referring of the mind to its own consciousness for truths indispensable to its own happiness! To what purpose do I, or am I about to, employ them? To perplex our clearest notions and living moral instincts? To deaden the feelings of will and free power, to extinguish the light of love and of conscience, to make myself and others worthless, soulless, God-less? No! to expose the folly and the legerdmain of those who have thus abused the blessed machine of language; to support all old and venerable truths; and by them to support, to kindle, to project the spirit; to

* "And from this account of obligation it follows, that we are obliged to nothing but what we ourselves are to gain or lose something by; for nothing else can be a violent motive to us. As we should not be obliged to obey the laws, or the magistrate, unless rewards or punishments, pleasure or pain, somehow or other, depended upon our obedience; so neither should we, without the same reason, be obliged to do what is right, to practise virtue, or to obey the commands of God." *Paley, Moral and Political Philosophy, B. II. c. 2, et passim.*—Ed.

make the reason spread light over our feelings, to make our feelings, with their vital warmth, actualize our reason:—these are my objects, these are my subjects; and are these the metaphysics which the bad spirits in hell delight in?

But how shall I avert the scorn of those critics who laugh at the oldness of my topics, evil and good, necessity and arbitrement, immortality and the ultimate aim? By what shall I regain their favour? My themes must be new, a French constitution; a balloon; a change of ministry; a fresh batch of kings on the Continent, or of peers in our happier island; or who had the best of it of two parliamentary gladiators, and whose speech, on the subject of Europe bleeding at a thousand wounds, or our own country struggling for herself and all human nature, was cheered by the greatest number of “laughs,” “loud laughs,” and “very loud laughs:”—(which, carefully marked by italics, form most conspicuous and strange parentheses in the newspaper reports.) Or if I must be philosophical, the last chemical discoveries,—provided I do not trouble my reader with the principle which gives them their highest interest, and the character of intellectual grandeur to the discoverer; or the last shower of stones, and that they were supposed, by certain philosophers, to have been projected from some volcano in the moon,—care being taken not to add any of the cramp reasons for this opinion! Something new, however, it must be, quite new and quite out of themselves! for whatever is within them, whatever is deep within them, must be as old as the first dawn of human reason. But to find no contradiction in the union of old and new, to contemplate the Ancient of days with feelings as fresh, as if they then sprang forth at his own *fiat*—this characterizes the minds that feel the riddle of the world,

nd may help to unravel it! To carry on the feelings of
hildhood into the powers of manhood, to combine the
hild's sense of wonder and novelty with the appearances
hich every day for perhaps forty years has rendered
amiliar,—

With sun and moon and stars throughout the year,
And man and woman —————

his is the character and privilege of genius, and one of
he marks which distinguish geni. And
to represent familiar objects as if the minds
of others to a like freshness of concerning
them—that constant accompaniment no less
than of bodily, health—to the same questioning
of a self-discovered and intelligent ignorance, like
he deep and massy foundations of a bridge,
orms half of the whole structure—(*præparatio*
linidium scientiæ, says Lord Bacon)—this is the prime
nerit of genius, and its most unequivocal mode of
manifestation. Who has not, a thousand times, seen it
now upon water? Who has not seen it with a new
eeling, since he has read Burns's comparison of sensual
leasure,

To snow that falls upon a river,
A moment white—then gone for ever! *

In philosophy equally, as in poetry, genius produces
he strongest impressions of novelty, while it rescues the
tallest and most admitted truths from the impotence
caused by the very circumstance of their universal
admission. Extremes meet;—a proverb, by the by, to
ollect and explain all the instances and exemplifications

* Tam O'Shanter.—Ed.

of which, would constitute and exhaust all philosophy. Truths, of all others the most awful and mysterious, yet being at the same time of universal interest, are too often considered as so true that they lose all the powers of truth, and lie bed-ridden in the dormitory of the soul, side by side with the most despised and exploded errors.

But as the class of critics, whose contempt I have anticipated, commonly consider themselves as men of the world, instead of hazarding additional sneers by appealing to the authorities of recluse philosophers,—for such, in spite of all history, the men who have distinguished themselves by profound thought, are generally deemed, from Plato and Aristotle to Cicero, and from Bacon to Berkeley—I will refer them to the darling of the polished court of Augustus, to the man, whose works have been in all ages deemed the models of good sense, and are still the pocket-companion of those who pride themselves on uniting the scholar with the gentleman. This accomplished man of the world has given us an account of the subjects of conversation between himself and the illustrious statesmen who governed, and the brightest luminaries who then adorned, the empire of the civilized world:

*Sermo oritur non de villis domibusve alienis,
Nec male, necne, lepus saltet. Sed quod magis ad nos
Pertinet, et necire incertum est, agitur: utrumne
Dirilis homines, an sint virtute beati?
Quilve ad amicitias, usus rectumne, trahat nos;
Et quæ sit natura boni, summumque quid ejus.—HOR.**

* Serm. II. vi. 71. Conversation arises not concerning the country seats or families of strangers, nor whether the dancing hare performed well or ill. But we discuss what more nearly concerns us, and which it is an evil not to know: whether men are made happy by riches or by virtue: whether interest or a love of virtue should lead us to friendship; and in what consists the nature of good, and what is the ultimate or supreme good—the *summum bonum*.

Berkeley indeed asserts, and is supported in his assertion by Lord Bacon and Sir Walter Raleigh, that without an habitual interest in these subjects, a man may be a dexterous intriguer, but never can be a statesman. Would to Heaven that the verdict to be passed on my labours depended on those who least needed them! The water lily in the midst of waters in its broad leaves, and expands its petals at the first uttering of the shower, and rejoices in the rain with a quicker sympathy, than the parched shrub in the sandy desert.

God created man in his own image— *be the image of his own eternity* created he man! (Eternity and self-existence what other likeness is possible, but immortality and moral self-determination? In addition to sensation, perception, and practical judgment—instinctive or acquirable—concerning the notices furnished by the organs of perception, all which in kind at least, the dog possesses in common with his master; in addition to these, God gave us reason, and with reason he gave us reflective self-consciousness; gave us principles, distinguished from the maxims and generalizations of outward experience by their absolute and essential universality and necessity; and above all, by superadding to reason the mysterious faculty of free-will and consequent personal amenability, he gave us conscience—that law of conscience, which in the power, and as the indwelling word, of a holy and omnipotent legislator commands us—from among the numerous ideas mathematical and philosophical, which the reason by the necessity of its own excellence creates for itself,—unconditionally commands us to attribute reality, and actual existence, to those ideas and to those only, without which the conscience itself would be baseless and contradictory, to the ideas of soul, of free-will, of immortality, and of God.

To God, as the reality of the conscience and the source of all obligation ; to free-will, as the power of the human being to maintain the obedience, which God through the conscience has commanded, against all the might of nature ; and to the immortality of the soul, as a state in which the weal and woe of man shall be proportioned to his moral worth. With this faith all nature,

—— all the mighty world
Of eye and ear ——*

presents itself to us, now as the aggregated material of duty, and now as a vision of the Most High revealing to us the mode, and time, and particular instance of applying and realizing that universal rule, pre-established in the heart of our reason.

"The displeasure of some readers," to use Berkeley's words, † "may, perhaps, be incurred by my *having surprised* them into certain reflections and inquiries, for which they have no curiosity. But perhaps some others may be pleased to find *themselves* carried into ancient times, *even though they should consider* the hoary maxims, *defended* in these essays, barely as hints to awaken and exercise the inquisitive reader, on points not beneath the attention of the ablest men. Those great men, Pythagoras, Plato, and Aristotle, men the most consummate in politics, who founded states, or instructed princes, or wrote most accurately on public government, were at the same time the most acute at all abstracted and sublime speculations ;—the clearest light being ever necessary to guide the most important actions. And whatever the

* Wordsworth. Lines near Tintern Abbey.—Ed.

† Siris, 350. The words in italics are substituted for the original.—Ed.

world *may opin* ne who hath not much meditated upon God, the human mind, and the *summum bonum*, may possibly make a thriving earth-worm, but will most indubitably make a *blundering* patriot and a sorry statesman."

ESSAY XVI.

*Blind is that soul which from this truth can swerve,
No state stands sure, but on the grounds of right,
Of virtue, knowledge ; judgment to preserve,
And all the pow'rs of learning requisite :
Though other shifts a present turn may serve,
Yet in the trial they will weigh too light.*

DANIEL.*

I EARNESTLY entreat the reader not to be dissatisfied either with himself or with the author, if he should not at once understand every part of the preceding essay ; but rather to consider it as a mere annunciation of a magnificent theme, the different parts of which are to be demonstrated and developed, explained, illustrated, and exemplified in the progress of the work. I likewise entreat him to peruse with attention and with candour, the weighty extract from the judicious Hooker, prefixed as the motto to a following essay. † In works of reasoning, as distinguished from narrations of events or statements of facts ; but more particularly in works, the object of which is to make us better acquainted with our own nature, a writer, whose meaning is everywhere comprehended as quickly as his sentences can be read, may indeed have produced an amusing composition, nay, by awakening and re-enlivening our recollections, a useful one ; but most assuredly he will not have added either to

* *Musophilus*. The line in italics is substituted.—*Ed.*

† Essay IV. Sect. On the Principles of Political Knowledge. See Eccl. Pol. I. c. L. 2.—*Ed.*

the stock of our knowledge, or to the vigour of our intellect. For how can we gather strength, but by exercise? How can a truth, new to us, be made our own without examination and self-questioning—any new truth, I mean, that relates to the properties of the mind, and its various faculties and affections? But whatever demands effort, requires time. Ignorance seldom vaults into knowledge, but passes into it through an intermediate state of obscurity, even as night into day through twilight. All speculative truths begin with a postulate, even the truths of geometry. They suppose an act of the will; for in the moral being lies the source of the intellectual. The first step to knowledge, or rather the previous condition of all insight into truth, is to dare commune with our very and permanent self. It is Warburton's remark, not the Friend's, that of all literary exertions, whether designed for the use or entertainment of the world, there are none of so much importance, or so immediately our concern, as those which let us into the knowledge of our own nature. Others may exercise the understanding or amuse the imagination; but these only can improve the heart and form the human mind to wisdom.

*The recluse hermit oftentimes more doth know
Of the world's inmost wheels, than worldlings can.
As man is of the world, the heart of man
Is an epitome of God's great book
Of creatures, and men need no farther look.*

DOWNER.*

The higher a man's station, the more arduous and full of peril his duties, the more comprehensive should his foresight be, the more rooted his tranquillity concerning

* Eclogue. The words in italics are substituted.—Ed.

life and death. But these are gifts which no experience can bestow, but the experience from within : and there is a nobleness of the whole personal being, to which the contemplation of all events and *phenomena* in the light of the three master ideas, announced in the foregoing pages, can alone elevate the spirit. *Anima sapiens*, says Giordano Bruno,—and let the sublime piety of the passage excuse some intermixture of error, or rather let the words, as they well may, be interpreted in a safe sense—*anima sapiens non timet mortem, immo interdum illam ultro appetit, illi ultro occurrit. Manet quippe substantiam omnem pro duratione eternitas, pro loco immensitas, pro actu omniformitas. Non lerem igitur ac futilem, atque gravissimam perfectoque homine dignissimam contemplationis partem persequimur, ubi divinitatis, naturæque splendorem, fusionem, et communicationem, non in cibo, potu, et ignobiliore quadam materia cum attonitorum seculo perquirimus ; sed in augusta Omnipotentis regia, immenso ætheris spatio, in infinita naturæ gemine omnis sentis et omnia facientis potentia, unde tot astrorum, mundorum, inquam, et numinum, uni altissimo concinentium atque saltantium absque numero atque fine juxta propositos ubique fines atque ordines contemplamur. Sic ex visibilibus æterno, immenso et innumerabili effectui sempiterna immensa illa majestas atque bonitas intellecta conspicitur, proque sua dignitate innumerabilium deorum (mundorum dico) adsistentia, concinentia, et gloriæ ipsius enarratione, immo ad oculos expressa concione glorificatur. Cui immenso mensum non quadrabit domicilium atque templum ;—ad cujus majestatis plenitudinem agnoscendam atque percolendam, numerabilium ministrorum nullus esset ordo. Eia igitur ad omniformis Dei omniformem imaginem conjectemus oculos, virum et magnum illius admiremur simulacrum !—Hinc miraculum magnum a Trismegisto appella-*

*batur homo, qui in Deum transeat quasi ipse sit Deus, qui conatur omnia fieri sicut Deus est omnia; ad objectum sine fine, ubique tamen finiendo, contendit, sicut infinitus est Deus, immensus, ubique totus.**

* *De monade, &c.* A wise spirit does not fear death, nay, sometimes—as in cases of voluntary martyrdom—seeks and goes forth to meet it, of its own accord. For there awaits all actual beings, for duration eternity, for place immensity, for action uniformity. We pursue, therefore, a species of contemplation or futile, but the weightiest and most worthy of an account. A man, while we examine and seek for the splendour, the intelligence, and communication of the Divinity and of nature, not in meats or drink, or any yet ignoble matter, with the race of the thunder-stricken; but in the august palace of the Omnipotent, in the illimitable eternal space, in the infinite power, that creates all things, and is the abiding being of all things.

There we may contemplate the host of stars, of worlds and their guardian deities, numbers without number, each in its appointed sphere, singing together, and dancing in adoration of the One Most High. Thus from the perpetual, immense, and innumerable goings on of the visible world, that sempiternal and absolutely infinite Majesty is intellectually beheld, and is glorified according to his glory, by the attendance and choral symphonies of innumerable gods, who utter forth the glory of their ineffable Creator in the expressive language of vision! To him illimitable, a limited temple will not correspond—to the acknowledgment and due worship of the plenitude of his majesty there would be no proportion in any numerable army of ministrant spirits. Let us then cast our eyes upon the omniform image of the attributes of the all-creating Supreme, nor admit any representation of his excellency but the living universe, which he has created!—Thence was man entitled by Trismegistus, the great miracle, inasmuch as he has been made capable of entering into union with God, as if he were himself a divine nature; tries to become all things, even as in God all things are; and in limitless progression of limited states of being, urges onward to the ultimate aim, even as God is simultaneously infinite, and every where all!

Giordano Bruno, the friend of Sir Philip Sidney and Fulk Greville, was burnt under pretence of atheism, at Rome, on the 17th of February, 1599–1600. (Scioppio ends his narrative in these words: *Sic ustulatus misere perit, renunciaturus, credo, in reliquis illis, quos finxit, mundis, quoniam pacto homines blasphemii et impii a Romanis tractari solent. Hic itaque modus in Roma est, quo contra homines impios et monstra hujusmodi procedi a nobis solet.*—Ed.) His works are perhaps the scarcest books ever printed. They are largely interesting as portraits of a vigorous mind struggling after

If this be regarded as the fancies of an enthusiast, by such as

deem themselves most free,
When they within this gross and visible sphere
Chain down the winged soul, scoffing ascent,
Proud in their meanness, —————.*

by such as pronounce every man out of his senses who has not lost his reason ; even such men may find some weight in the historical fact that from persons, who had previously strengthened their intellects and feelings by the contemplation of principles—principles, the actions correspondent to which involve one half of their consequences, by their ennobling influence on the agent's own soul, and have omnipotence, as the pledge for the remainder—we have derived the surest and most general maxims of prudence. Of high value are they all. Yet there is one among them worth all the rest, which in the fullest and primary sense of the word is, indeed, the

truth, amid many prejudices, which from the state of the Romish Church, in which he was born, have a claim to much indulgence. One of them (entitled Ember Week) is curious for its lively accounts of the rude state of London, at that time, both as to the streets and the manners of the citizens. (*La cena de le ceneri*. See particularly the second dialogue.—*Ed.*) The most industrious historians of speculative philosophy, have not been able to procure more than a few of his works. Accidentally I have been more fortunate in this respect, than those who have written hitherto on the unhappy philosopher of Nola ; as out of eleven works, the titles of which are preserved to us, I have had an opportunity of perusing six. I was told, when in Germany, that there is a complete collection of them in the royal library at Copenhagen. If so, it is unique.

(Wagner has collected and published seven of the Italian works of Bruno : Leipzig, 1830. These are, *Il Candelajo* ; *La cena de le ceneri* ; *De la causa, principio et uno* ; *De l'infinito, universo e mondi* ; *Spaccio de la bestia trionfante* ; *Cabala del cavallo Pegaseo* ; and *De gli eroici furori*. Two others are mentioned by Bruno himself in the *Cena*, &c. ; namely, *L'arca di Noè*, and *Purgatorio dell' inferno*. Wagner could not discover these. The titles of twenty-three works in Latin are given by Wagner.—*Ed.*)

* Poetical Works, I. p. 99.—*Ed.*

maxim, that is, *maximum*, of human prudence ; and of which history itself in all that makes it most worth studying, is one continued comment and exemplification. It is this : that there is a wisdom higher than prudence, to which prudence stands in the same relation as the mason and carpenter to the genial and scientific architect ; and it is from the habits of thinking and feeling, which in this wisdom had their first formation, that our Nelsons and Wellingtons inherit that glorious hardihood, which completes the undertaking, ere the contemptuous calculator, who has left nothing omitted in his scheme of probabilities, except the might of the human mind, has finished his pretended proof of its improbability. You look to facts, and profess to take experience for your guide. Well ! I too appeal to experience : and let facts be the ordeal of my position ! Therefore, although I have in this and the preceding essays quoted more frequently and copiously than I shall permit myself to do in future, I owe it to the cause I am pleading, not to deny myself the gratification of supporting this connection of practical heroism with previous habits of philosophic thought, by a singularly appropriate passage from an author whose works can be called rare only from their being, I fear, rarely read, however commonly talked of. It is the instance of Xenophon as stated by Lord Bacon, who would himself furnish an equal instance, if there could be found an equal commentator.

“It is of Xenophon the philosopher, who went from Socrates’ school into Asia, in the expedition of Cyrus the younger, against King Artaxerxes. This Xenophon, at that time, was very young, and never had seen the wars before ; neither had any command in the army, but only followed the war as a volunteer, for the love and conversation of Proxenus, his friend. He was present when

Falinus came in message from the great King to the Grecians, after that Cyrus was slain in the field, and they, a handful of men, left to themselves in the midst of the King's territories, cut off from their country by many navigable rivers, and many hundred miles. The message imported, that they should deliver up their arms and submit themselves to the King's mercy. To which message, before answer was made, divers of the army conferred familiarly with Falinus, and amongst the rest Xenophon happened to say: 'Why, Falinus! we have now but these two things left, our arms and our virtue; and if we yield up our arms, how shall we make use of our virtue?' Whereto Falinus, smiling on him, said, 'If I be not deceived, young gentleman, you are an Athenian, and I believe, you study philosophy, and it is pretty that you say; but you are much abused, if you think your virtue can withstand the King's power.' Here was the scorn: the wonder followed;—which was, that this young scholar or philosopher, after all the captains were murdered in parley, by treason, conducted those ten thousand foot through the heart of all the King's high countries from Babylon to Græcia, in safety, in despite of all the King's forces, to the astonishment of the world, and the encouragement of the Grecians, in time succeeding, to make invasion upon the kings of Persia; as was after purposed by Jason the Thessalian, attempted by Agesilaus the Spartan, and achieved by Alexander the Macedonian, all upon the ground of the act of that young scholar.*

Often have I reflected with awe on the great and disproportionate power, which an individual of no extraordinary talents or attainments may exert, by merely throwing off

* Advancement of Learning. B. I.—Ed.

all restraint of conscience. What then must not be the power, where an individual, of consummate wickedness, can organise into the unity and rapidity of an individual will all the natural and artificial forces of a populous and wicked nation? And could we bring within the field of imagination, the devastation effected in the moral world, by the violent removal of old customs, familiar sympathies, willing reverences, and habits of subordination almost naturalized into instinct; of the mild influences of reputation, and the other ordinary props and aidances of our infirm virtue, or at least, if virtue be too high a name, of our well-doing; and above all, if we could give form and body to all the effects produced on the principles and dispositions of nations by the infectious feelings of insecurity, and the soul-sickening sense of unsteadiness in the whole edifice of civil society; the horrors of battle, though the miseries of a whole war were brought together before our eyes in one disastrous field, would present but a tame tragedy in comparison. Nay it would even present a sight of comfort and of elevation, if this field of carnage were the sign and result of a national resolve, of a general will, so to die, that neither deluge nor fire should take away the name of country from their graves, rather than to tread the same clods of earth, no longer a country, and themselves alive in nature, but dead in infamy. What is Greece at this present moment? It is the country of the heroes from Codrus to Philopœmen; and so it would be, though all the sands of Africa should cover its corn-fields and olive gardens, and not a flower were left on Hymettus for a bee to murmur in.

If then the power with which wickedness can invest the human being be thus tremendous, greatly does it behove us to inquire into its source and causes. So doing we shall quickly discover that it is not vice, as

vice, which is thus mighty ; but systematic vice. Vice self-consistent and entire ; crime corresponding to crime ; villany entrenched and barricaded by villany ; this is the condition and main constituent of its power. The abandonment of all principle of right enables the soul to choose and act upon a principle of wrong, and to subordinate to this one principle all the various vices of human nature. For it is a mournful truth, that as devastation is incomparably an easier work than production, so may all its means and instruments be more easily arranged into a scheme and system : even as in a siege every building and garden, which the faithful governor must destroy, as impeding the defensive means of the garrison, or furnishing means of defence to the besieger, occasions a wound in feelings which virtue herself has fostered : and virtue, because it is virtue, loses perforce part of her energy in the reluctance with which she proceeds to a business so repugnant to her wishes, as a choice of evils. But he, who has once said with his whole heart, Evil, be thou my good ! has removed a world of obstacles by the very decision, that he will have no obstacles but those of force and brute matter. The road to justice

*Curves round the corn-field and the hill of vines,
Honouring the holy bounds of property ;—**

but the path of the lightning is straight ; and straight the fearful path

*Of the cannon-ball. Direct it flies and rapid,
Shatt'ring that it may reach, and shatt'ring what it reaches.†*

Happily for mankind, however, the obstacles which a consistently evil mind no longer finds in itself, it finds in

* Poetical Works, IIL p. 24.—*Ed.*

† *Ib.* p. 23.—*Ed.*

its own unsuitableness to human nature. A limit is fixed to its power: but within that limit, both as to the extent and duration of its influence, there is little hope of checking its career, if giant and united vices are opposed only by mixed and scattered virtues; and those too, probably, from the want of some combining principle, which assigns to each its due place and rank, at civil war with themselves, or at best perplexing and counteracting each other. In our late agony of glory and of peril, did we not too often hear even good men declaiming on the horrors and crimes of war, and softening or staggering the minds of their brethren by details of individual wretchedness? Thus under pretence of avo'iding blood, they were withdrawing the will from the defence of the very source of those blessings without which the blood would flow idly in our veins! Thus lest a few should fall on the bulwarks in glory, they were preparing us to give up the whole state to baseness, and the children of free ancestors to become slaves, and the fathers of slaves!

Machiavelli has well observed, *Sono di tre generazioni cervelli: l'uno intende per se; l'altro intende quanto da altri gli è mostro; e il terzo non intende nè per se stesso, nè per dimostrazione di altri.** "There are brains of three races. The one understands of itself; the second understands as much as is shown it by others; the third neither understands of itself nor what is shown it by others."† I should have no hesitation in placing

* *Il Principe*, c. xxii.—*Ed.*

† Οὗτος μὲν πανόριστος, δι' αὐτῷ πάντα νοήσας,
φρασσάμενος τὰ κ' ἔπειτα καὶ ἐς τέλος ἦεν ἀμείνων·
Ἔσθλος δ' αὖ κακείνος, δι' ἐδ' εἰπόντι πίθηται.
Ὅς δέ κε μήτ' αὐτὸς νοήῃ, μήτ' ἄλλου ἀκούων
Ἐν θυμῷ βάλλεται, ὃ δ' αὖτ' ἀχρήσιος ἐστίν.

Op. et Dic. 293, &c.

Cic. p. Cluent. c. 31. *Liv.* xxii. 29. *Diog. Laer.* vii. 1. 21.—*Ed.*

that man in the third class of brains, for history of the last twenty years has not supplied comment on the preceding text. The widest prudence are like arms without hearts, dis those feelings which flow forth from principle fountain. So little are even the genuine expedience likely to be perceived or acted up who have been habituated to admit nothing expedience, that I dare hazard the assertion, whole chapter of contents of European ruin, might be unanswerably deduced from the some maxim which has been repeatedly demonstrated, and enforced with a host of in some one or other of the works of Machiavelli or Harrington. Indeed I can remember no importance which was not distinctly foretold not by a lucky prize drawn among a thousand out of the lottery wheel of conjecture, but deduced as certain consequences from established misdeeds. It would be a melancholy, but a noble employment, for some vigorous mind acquainted with the recent history of Europe the weightiest aphorisms of Machiavelli illustrating by appropriate facts the breach or of each, to render less mysterious the present lawless violence. The apt motto to such a be,—*The children of darkness are wiser in the than the children of light.*

So grievously, indeed, have men been deceived by showy theories of unlearned mock thinkers seems a tendency in the public mind to shun and to expect help from any quarter rather than seriousness and reflection; as if some invader would think for us, when we gave up the

thinking for ourselves. But in the first place, did those, who opposed the theories of innovators, conduct their untheoretic opposition with more wisdom or to a happier result? And secondly, are societies now constructed on principles so few and so simple, that we could, if even we wished it, act as it were by instinct, like our distant forefathers in the infancy of states? Doubtless, to act is nobler than to think: but as the old man doth not become a child by means of his second childishness, as little can a nation exempt itself from the necessity of thinking which has once learned to think. Miserable was the delusion of the late mad realizer of mad dreams, in his belief that he should ultimately succeed in transforming the nations of Europe into the unreasoning hordes of a Babylonian or Tartar empire, or even in reducing the age to the simplicity—so desirable for tyrants—of those times, when the sword and the plough were the sole implements of human skill. Those are epochs in the history of a people which having been can never more recur. Extirpate all civilization and all its arts by the sword, trample down all ancient institutions, rights, distinctions, and privileges, drag us backward to our old barbarism, as beasts to the den of Cacus—deem you that thus you could re-create the unexamining and boisterous youth of the world, when the sole questions were—"What is to be conquered? and who is the most famous leader?"

In an age in which artificial knowledge is received almost at the birth, intellect and thought alone can be our upholder and judge. Let the importance of this truth procure pardon for its repetition. Only by means of seriousness and meditation and the free infliction of censure in the spirit of love, can the true philanthropist of the present time, curb-in himself and his contempora-

ries ; only by these can he aid in preventing the evils which threaten us, not from the terrors of an enemy so much as from our own fear of, and aversion to, the toils of reflection. For all must now be taught in sport—science, morality, yea, religion itself. And yet few now sport from the actual impulse of a believing fancy and in a happy delusion. Of the most influential class, at least, of our literary guides—the anonymous authors of our periodical publications—the most part assume this character from cowardice or malice, till having begun with studied ignorance and a premeditated levity, they at length realize the lie, and end indeed in a pitiable destitution of all intellectual power.

To many I shall appear to speak insolently, because the public,—(for that is the phrase which has succeeded to The Town, of the wits of the reign of Charles II.)—the public is at present accustomed to find itself appealed to as the infallible judge, and each reader complimented with excellencies, which if he really possessed, to what purpose is he a reader, unless, perhaps, to remind himself of his own superiority ! I confess that I think very differently. I have not a deeper conviction on earth, than that the principles of taste, morals, and religion, which are taught in the commonest books of recent composition, are false, injurious, and debasing. If these sentiments should be just, the consequences must be so important, that every well-educated man, who professes them in sincerity, deserves a patient hearing. He may fairly appeal even to those whose persuasions are most opposed to his own, in the words of the philosopher of Nola :—*Ad isthuc quæso vos, qualiacunque primo videantur aspectu, attendite, ut qui vobis forsan insanire videar, saltem quibus insaniam rationibus cognoscatis.* What I feel deeply, freely will I utter. Truth is not detraction ;

and assuredly we do not hate him to whom we tell the truth. But with whomsoever we play the deceiver and flatterer, him at the bottom we despise. We are, indeed, under a necessity to conceive a vileness in him, in order to diminish the sense of the wrong we have committed, by the worthlessness of the object.

Through no excess of confidence in the strength of my talents, but with the deepest assurance of the justice of my cause, I bid defiance to all the flatterers of the folly and foolish self-opinion of the half instructed many ;—to all who fill the air with festal explosions and false fires sent up against the lightnings of heaven, in order that the people may neither distinguish the warning flash nor hear the threatening thunder ! How recently did we stand alone in the world ? And though the one storm has blown over, another may even now be gathering : or haply the hollow murmur of the earthquake within the bowels of our own commonweal may strike a direr terror than ever did the tempest of foreign warfare. Therefore, though the first quatrain is no longer applicable, yet the moral truth and the sublime exhortation of the following sonnet can never be superannuated. With it I conclude this essay, thanking God that I have communed with, honoured, and loved its wise and high-minded author. To know that such men are among us, is of itself an antidote against despondence.—

Another year !—another deadly blow !
 Another mighty empire overthrown !
 And we are left, or shall be left, alone ;
 The last that dares to struggle with the foe.
 'Tis well ! from this day forward we shall know
 That in ourselves our safety must be sought ;
 That by our own right hands it must be wrought ;
 That we must stand unpropt or be laid low.

O dastard ! whom such foretaste doth not cheer !
We shall exult, if they, who rule the land,
Be men who hold its many blessings dear,
Wise, upright, valiant ; not a venal band,
Who are to judge of danger which they fear,
And honour, which they do not understand.

WORDSWORTH.

THE LANDING-PLACE

OR,

ESSAYS INTERPOSED FOR AMUSEMENT, RETROSPECT,
AND PREPARATION.

MISCELLANY THE FIRST.

*Etiam a Musis si quando animum paulisper abducamus, apud
Musas nihilominus feriamur: at reclines quidem, at otiosas, at de
his et illis inter se libere colloquentes.*



THE LANDING-PLACE.

ESSAY I.

O blessed letters ! that combine in one
All ages past, and make one live with all :
By you we do confer with who are gone,
And the dead-living unto council call !
By you the unborn shall have communion
Of what we feel and what doth us befall.

Since writings are the veins, the arteries,
And undecaying life-strings of those hearts,
That still shall pant and still shall exercise
Their mightiest powers when nature none imparts :
And the strong constitution of their praise
Wear out the infection of distemper'd days.

DANIEL'S MUSOPHILUS.

THE intelligence, which produces or controuls human actions and occurrences, is often represented by the Mystics under the name and notion of the supreme harmonist. I do not myself approve of these metaphors: they seem to imply a restlessness to understand that which is not among the appointed objects of our comprehension or discursive faculty. But certainly there is one excellence in good music, to which, without mysticism, we may find or make an analogy in the records of history. I allude to that sense of recognition, which accompanies our sense of novelty in the most original passages of a great composer. If we listen to a symphony of Cimarosa, the present strain still seems not only to recall, but

almost to renew, some past movement, another and yet the same! Each present movement bringing back as it were, and embodying the spirit of some melody that had gone before, anticipates and seems trying to overtake something that is to come: and the musician has reached the summit of his art, when having thus modified the present by the past, he at the same time weds the past in the present to some prepared and corresponsive future. The auditor's thoughts and feelings move under the same influence: retrospection blends with anticipation, and hope and memory, a female Janus, become one power with a double aspect. A similar effect the reader may produce for himself in the pages of history, if he will be content to substitute an intellectual complacency for pleasurable sensation. The events and characters of one age, like the strains in music, recall those of another, and the variety by which each is individualized, not only gives a charm and poignancy to the resemblance, but likewise renders the whole more intelligible. Meantime ample room is afforded for the exercise both of the judgment and the fancy, in distinguishing cases of real resemblance from those of intentional imitation, the analogies of nature, revolving upon herself, from the masquerade figures of cunning and vanity.

It is not from identity of opinions, or from similarity of events and outward actions, that a real resemblance in the radical character can be deduced. On the contrary, men of great and stirring powers, who are destined to mould the age in which they are born, must first mould themselves upon it. Mohammed born twelve centuries later, and in the heart of Europe, would not have been a false prophet; nor would a false prophet of the present generation have been a Mohammed in the seventh century. I have myself, therefore, derived the deepest

interest from the comparison of men, whose characters at first view appear widely dissimilar, who yet have produced similar effects on their different ages, and this by the exertion of powers which on examination will be found far more alike, than the altered drapery and costume would have led us to suspect. Of the heirs of fame few are more respected by me, though for very different qualities, than Erasmus and Luther; scarcely any one has a larger share of my aversion than Voltaire; and even of the better-hearted Rousseau I was never more than a very lukewarm admirer. I should perhaps too rudely affront the general opinion, if I avowed my whole creed concerning the proportions of real talent between the two purifiers of revealed religion, now neglected as obsolete, and the two modern conspirators against its authority, who are still the Alpha and Omega of continental genius. Yet when I abstract the questions of evil and good, and measure only the effects produced and the mode of producing them, I have repeatedly found the names of Voltaire, Rousseau, and Robespierre, recall in a similar cluster and connection those of Erasmus, Luther, and Muncer.

Those who are familiar with the works of Erasmus, and who know the influence of his wit, as the pioneer of the Reformation; and who likewise know, that by his wit, added to the vast variety of knowledge communicated in his works, he had won over by anticipation so large a part of the polite and lettered world to the Protestant party; will be at no loss in discovering the intended counterpart in the life and writings of the veteran Frenchman. They will see, indeed, that the knowledge of the one was solid through its whole extent, and that of the other extensive at a cheap rate, by its superficiality; that the wit of the one is always bottomed

on sound sense, peoples and enriches the mind of the reader with an endless variety of distinct images and living interests; and that his broadest laughter is everywhere translatable into grave and weighty truth: while the wit of the Frenchman, without imagery, without character, and without that pathos which gives the magic charm to genuine humour, consists, when it is most perfect, in happy turns of phrase, but far too often in fantastic incidents, outrages of the pure imagination, and the poor low trick of combining the ridiculous with the venerable, where he, who does not laugh, abhors. Neither will they have forgotten, that the object of the one was to drive the thieves and mummers out of the temple, while the other was propelling a worse banditti, first to profane and pillage, and ultimately to raze it. Yet not the less will they perceive, that the effects remain parallel, the circumstances analogous, and the instruments the same. In each case the effects extended over Europe, were attested and augmented by the praise and patronage of thrones and dignities, and are not to be explained but by extraordinary industry and a life of literature; in both instances the circumstances were supplied by an age of hopes and promises—the age of Erasmus restless from the first vernal influences of real knowledge, that of Voltaire from the hectic of imagined superiority. In the voluminous works of both, the instruments employed are chiefly those of wit and amusing erudition, and alike in both the errors and evils, real or imputed, in religion and politics are the objects of the battery. And here we must stop. The two men were essentially different. Exchange mutually their dates and spheres of action, yet Voltaire, had he been ten-fold a Voltaire, could not have made up an Erasmus; and Erasmus must have emptied himself of

half his greatness and all his goodness, to have become a Voltaire.

Shall I succeed better or worse with the next pair, in this our new dance of death, or rather of the shadows which I have brought forth—two by two—from the historic ark? In our first couple I have at least secured an honourable retreat, and though I failed as to the agents, I have maintained a fair analogy in the actions and the objects. But the heroic Luther, a giant awaking in his strength, and the crazy Rousseau, the dreamer of love-sick tales, and the spinner of speculative cob-webs; shy of light as the mole, but as quick-eared too for every whisper of the public opinion; the teacher of stoic pride in his principles, yet the victim of morbid vanity in his feelings and conduct! From what point of likeness can we commence the comparison between a Luther and a Rousseau? And truly had I been seeking for characters that, taken as they really existed, closely resemble each other, and this too to our first apprehensions, and according to the common rules of biographical comparison, I could scarcely have made a more unlucky choice: unless I had desired that my parallel of the German *son of thunder* and the visionary of Geneva, should sit on the same bench with honest Fluellen's of Alexander the Great and Harry of Monmouth. Still, however, the same analogy would hold as in my former instance: the effects produced on their several ages by Luther and Rousseau, were commensurate with each other, and were produced in both cases by what their contemporaries felt as serious and vehement eloquence, and an elevated tone of moral feeling: and Luther, not less than Rousseau, was actuated by an almost superstitious hatred of superstition, and a turbulent prejudice against prejudices. In the relation too which their writings severally bore to those of Erasmus

and Voltaire, and the way in which the latter co-operated with them to the same general end, and finding in every class of admirers and proselytes the parallel is complete.

I cannot, however, rest here. None of the apparent incongruities, I am disposed to point for a resemblance in the men themselves, for that similarity in their rational natures, which I abandoned all pretence and desire of shewing in the instances of Voltaire and Erasmus. But then my readers must think of Luther *not* as he really was, but as he might have been, if he had been born in the age and under the circumstances of the Swiss philosopher. For this purpose I must strip him of many advantages which he derived from his own times, and must contemplate him in his natural weakness as well as in his original strength. Each referred all things to his own ideal. The ideal was indeed widely different in the one and in the other: and this was not the least of Luther's many advantages, not to use a far more proper of his own, not one of his least favours of permanent grace. Happily for him he had derived his estimate from a common measure already received by the good and wise: I mean the inspired writings, the study of which Erasmus had previously received among the learned. To know that we are in sympathy with others, moderates our feelings as well as strengthens our convictions: and for the mind, which opposes itself to the fall of the multitude, it is more especially desirable, that there should exist an object out of itself, on which it may fix its attention, and thus balance its own energies.

Rousseau, on the contrary, in the inappetent spirit of his age and birth-place,* had slipped the cable of his

* Infidelity was so common in Geneva about that time, that Voltaire in one of his letters exults, that in this, Calvin's own city, some had dared only of the most ignorant believed in Christianity would not

faith, and steered by the compass of unaided reason, ignorant of the hidden currents that were bearing him out of his course, and too proud to consult the faithful charts prized and held sacred by his forefathers. But the strange influences of his bodily temperament on his understanding; his constitutional melancholy pampered into a morbid excess by solitude; his wild dreams of suspicion; his hypochondriacal fancies of hosts of conspirators all leagued against him and his cause, and headed by some arch-enemy, to whose machinations he attributed every trifling mishap—all, much the creatures of his imagination, as if instead of men he had conceived them to be infernal spirits and beings preternatural—these, or at least the predisposition to them, existed in the ground-work of his nature: they were parts of Rousseau himself. And what corresponding in kind to these, not to speak of degree, can we detect in the character of his supposed parallel? This difficulty will suggest itself at the first thought, to those who derive all their knowledge of Luther from the meagre biography met with in the Lives of eminent Reformers, or even from the ecclesiastical histories of Mosheim or Milner: for a life of Luther, in extent and style of execution proportioned to the grandeur and interest of the subject, a life of the man Luther, as well as of Luther the theologian, is still a *desideratum* in English literature, though perhaps there is no subject for which so many unused materials are extant, both printed and in manuscript.*

form. This was, no doubt, one of Voltaire's usual lies of exaggeration: it is not however to be denied, that here, and throughout Switzerland, he and the dark master in whose service he employed himself, had ample grounds of triumph.

* The affectionate respect in which I hold the name of Dr. Jortin—

one of the many illustrious nurslings of the college to which I deem it no small honour to have belonged—Jesus, Cambridge—renders it painful to me to assert, that the above remark holds almost equally true of a life of Erasmus. But every scholar well read in the writings of Erasmus and his illustrious contemporaries, must have discovered, that Jortin had neither collected sufficient, nor the best, materials for his work : and—perhaps from that very cause—he grew weary of his task, before he had made a full use of the scanty materials which he had collected.

ESSAY II.

Is it, I ask, most important to the best interest of mankind, temporal as well as spiritual, that certain works, the of which are fixed and unalterable, should be diguished from all other works, not in degree only but even in kind? And that these, collectively, should form THE BOOK, to which in the concerns of faith and morality the last recourse is to be had, and from the admitted decisions of which no man dare appeal?—If the existence of a book so called and characterized be, as the Koran itself suffices to evince, a mighty bond of union, among nations whom all other causes tend to separate; if moreover the book revered by us and our forefathers has been the foster-nurse of learning in the darkest, and of civilization in the rudest, times; and lastly, if this so vast and wide a blessing is not to be founded in a delusion, and doomed therefore to the impermanence and scorn in which sooner or later all delusions must end; how, I pray you, is it conceivable that this should be brought about and secured, otherwise than by God's special vouchsafement to this one book, exclusively, of that divine MEAN, that uniform and perfect middle way, which in all points is at safe and equal distance from all errors whether of excess or defect? But again, if this be true—and what Protestant Christian worthy of his baptismal dedication will deny its truth?—if in the one book we are entitled, or even permitted, to expect the golden mean throughout;—surely we ought not to be hard and over-stern in our censures of the mistakes and infirmities of those, who pretending to no warrant of extraordinary inspiration have yet been

* This is one of the hinges on which the gate of egress from the spiritual Rome turns. Historically, the affirmative to the question has been the constant and close companion of Protestantism:—but whether it be likewise its indispensable support, remains yet to be discussed, at the tribunal of sound philosophy. Hitherto both the ay and the no have been, as it appears to me, but very weakly and superficially argued. But I confess that Chillingworth makes me half a Roman Catholic on this point; lest in acceding to the grounds of his arguments against the Romanists, I should become less than half a Christian, and lose the substantive in my earnestness to tear off its parasitical and suffocating epithet:—that is, cease to be a Catholic in aversion to the Papal bull of Roman Catholic. 1830.

raised up by God's providence to be of highest power and eminence in the reformation of his Church. Far rather does it behove us to consider, in how many instances the peccant humour native to the man had been wrought upon by the faithful study of that only faultless model, and corrected into an unsinning, or at least a venial, predominance in the writer or preacher. Yea, that not seldom the infirmity of a zealous soldier in the warfare of Christ has been made the very mould and ground-work of that man's peculiar gifts and virtues. Grateful too we should be, that the very faults of famous men have been fitted to the age, on which they were to act: and that thus the folly of man has proved the wisdom of God, and been made the instrument of his mercy to mankind.

WHOEVER has sojourned in Eisenach, will assuredly have visited the Wartburg, interesting by so many historical associations, which stands on a high rock, about two miles to the south from the city gate. To this castle Luther was taken on his return from the imperial Diet, where Charles V. had pronounced the ban upon him, and limited his safe convoy to one and twenty days. On the last but one of these days, as he was on his way to Waltershausen, a town in the duchy of Saxe Gotha, a few leagues to the south-east of Eisenach, he was stopped in a hollow behind the castle Altenstein, and carried to the Wartburg. The Elector of Saxony, who could not have refused to deliver up Luther, as one put in the ban by the Emperor and the Diet, had ordered John of Berleptsch, the governor of the Wartburg, and Burckhardt von Hundt, the governor of Altenstein, to take Luther to one or the other of these castles, without acquainting him which; in order that he might be able, with safe conscience, to declare, that he did not know where Luther was. Accordingly they took him to the Wartburg, under the name of the Chevalier (*Ritter*) George.

To this friendly imprisonment the Reformation owes many of Luther's most important labours. In this place he wrote his works against auricular confession, against

Jacob Latronum, the tract on the abuse of masses, that against clerical and monastic vows, composed his exposition of the 22, 27, and 68 Psalms, finished his declaration of the *Magnificat*, began to write his Church homilies, and translated the New Testament. Here too, and during this time, he is said to have hurled his inkstand at the devil, the black spot from which yet remains on the stone wall of the room he studied in; which, surely, no one will have visited the Wartburg without having had pointed out to him by the good catholic who is, or at least some few years ago was the warden of the castle. He must have been either a very supercilious or a very incurious traveller if he did not, for the gratification of his guide at least, inform himself by means of his pen-knife, that the said marvellous blot bids defiance to all the toils of the scrubbing brush, and is to remain a sign for ever; and with this advantage over most of its kindred, that being capable of a double interpretation, it is equally flattering to the Protestant and the Papist, and is regarded by the wonder-loving zealots of both parties, with equal faith.

Whether the great man ever did throw his inkstand at his Satanic Majesty, whether he ever boasted of the exploit, and himself declared the dark blotch on his study wall in the Wartburg, to be the result and relict of this author-like hand-grenado,—(happily for mankind he used his inkstand at other times to better purpose, and with more effective hostility against the arch-fiend)—I leave to my reader's own judgment; on condition, however, that he has previously perused Luther's Table Talk, and other writings of the same stamp, of some of his most illustrious contemporaries, which contain facts still more strange and whimsical, related by themselves and of themselves, and accompanied with solemn protestations

of the truth of their statements. Luther's Table Talk, which to a truly philosophic mind, will not be less interesting than Rousseau's Confessions, I have not myself the means of consulting at present, and cannot therefore say, whether this ink-pot adventure is, or is not, told or referred to, in it;* but many considerations incline me to give credit to the story.

Luther's unremitting literary labour and his sedentary mode of life, during his confinement in the Wartburg, where he was treated with the greatest kindness, and enjoyed every liberty consistent with his own safety, had begun to undermine his former unusually strong health. He suffered many and most distressing effects of indigestion and a deranged state of the digestive organs. Melancthon, whom he had desired to consult the physicians at Erfurth, sent him some de-obstruent medicines, and the advice to take regular and severe exercise. At first he followed the advice, sate and laboured less, and spent whole days in the chase; but like the younger Pliny, he strove in vain to form a taste for this favourite amusement of the gods of the earth, as appears from a passage in his letter to George Spalatin, which I translate for an additional reason;—to prove to the admirers of Rousseau, who perhaps will not be less affronted by this biographical parallel, than the zealous Lutherians will be offended, that if my comparison should turn out groundless on the whole, the failure will not have arisen either from the want of sensibility in our great reformer, or of angry aversion to those in high places, whom he regarded as the oppressors of their rightful equals. "I have been," he writes, "employed for two days in the sports of the field, and was willing myself to taste this bitter-

* It is not.—Ed.

sweet amusement of the great heroes : we have caught two hares, and one brace of poor little partridges. An employment this which does not ill suit quiet leisurely folks : for even in the midst of the ferrets and dogs, I have had theological fancies. But as much pleasure as the general appearance of the scene and the mere looking-on occasioned me, even so much it prompted me to think of the mystery and emblem which lie beneath it. For what does this symbol signify, but that the devil, through his godless huntsmen and dogs, the shops and theologians to wit, doth privily chase and catch the innocent poor little beasts ? Ah ! the simple and credulous souls came thereby far too plain before my eyes. Thereto comes a yet more frightful mystery : as at my earnest entreaty we had saved alive one poor little hare, and I had concealed it in the sleeve of my great coat, and had strolled off a short distance from it, the dogs in the mean time found the poor hare. Such, too, is the fury of the Pope with Satan, that he destroys even the souls that had been saved, and troubles himself little about my pains and entreaties. Of such hunting then I have had enough." In another passage he tells his correspondent, "You know it is hard to be a prince, and not in some degree a robber, and the greater a prince the more a robber." Of our Henry VIII. he says, "I must answer the grim lion that passes himself off for king of England. The ignorance in the book is such as one naturally expects from a king ; but the bitterness and impudent falsehood is quite leonine." And in his circular letter to the princes, on occasion of the peasants' war, he uses a language so inflammatory, and holds forth a doctrine which borders so near on the holy right of insurrection, that it may as well remain untranslated.

Had Luther been himself a prince he could not have

desired better treatment than he received during his eight months' stay in the Wartburg; and in consequence of a more-luxurious diet than he had been accustomed to, he was plagued with temptations both from the flesh and the devil. It is evident from his letters* that he suffered under great irritability of his nervous system, the common effect of deranged digestion in men of sedentary habits, who are at the same time intense thinkers; and this irritability added to, and revivifying, the impressions made upon him in early life, and fostered by the theological systems of his manhood, is abundantly sufficient to explain all his apparitions and all his nightly combats with evil spirits. I see nothing improbable in the supposition, that in one of those unconscious half-sleeps, or rather those rapid alternations of the sleeping with the half-waking state, which is the true witching time,

----- the season
Wherein the spirits hold their wont to walk,

the fruitful *matrix* of ghosts—I see nothing improbable, that in some one of those momentary slumbers, into which the suspension of all thought in the perplexity of intense thinking so often passes, Luther should have had a full view of the room in which he was sitting, of his writing table and all the implements of study, as they really existed, and at the same time a brain-image of the devil, vivid enough to have acquired apparent outness, and a distance regulated by the proportion of its distinctness to

* I can scarcely conceive a more delightful volume than might be made from Luther's letters, especially from those that were written from the Wartburg, if they were translated in the simple, sinewy, idiomatic, hearty, mother-tongue of the original. A difficult task I admit—and scarcely possible for any man, however great his talents in other respects, whose favourite reading has not lain among the English writers from Edward VI. to Charles I.

that of the objects really impressed on the outward senses.

If this Christian Hercules, this heroic cleanser of the Augean stable of apostasy, had been born and educated in the present or the preceding generation, he would, doubtless, have holden himself for a man of genius and original power. But with this faith alone he would scarcely have removed the mountains which he did remove. The darkness and superstition of the age, which required such a reformer, had moulded his mind for the reception of impressions concerning himself, better suited to inspire the strength and enthusiasm necessary for the task of reformation, impressions more in sympathy with the spirits whom he was to influence. He deemed himself gifted with supernatural influxes, an especial servant of heaven, a chosen warrior, fighting as the general of a small but faithful troop, against an army of evil beings headed by the prince of the air. These were no metaphorical beings in his apprehension. He was a poet indeed, as great a poet as ever lived in any age or country; but his poetic images were so vivid, that they mastered the poet's own mind! He was possessed with them, as with substances distinct from himself: Luther did not write, he acted poems. The Bible was a spiritual, indeed, but not a figurative armoury in his belief: it was the magazine of his warlike stores, and from thence he was to arm himself, and supply both shield and sword, and javelin, to the elect. Methinks I see him sitting, the heroic student, in his chamber in the Wartburg, with his midnight lamp before him, seen by the late traveller in the distant plain of Bischofsroda, as a star on the mountain! Below it lies the Hebrew Bible open, on which he gazes, his brow pressing on his palm, brooding over some obscure text, which he desires to make plain

to the simple boor and to the humble artizan, and to transfer its whole force into their own natural and living tongue. And he himself does not understand it! Thick darkness lies on the original text: he counts the letters, he calls up the roots of each separate word, and questions them as the familiar spirits of an oracle. In vain: thick darkness continues to cover it; not a ray of meaning dawns through it. With sullen and angry hope he reaches for the Vulgate, his old and sworn enemy, the treacherous confederate of the Roman anti-Christ, which he so gladly, when he can, rebukes for idolatrous falsehoods, that had dared place

Within the sanctuary itself their shrines,
Abominations! —————

Now—O thought of humiliation—he must entreat its aid. See! there has the sly spirit of apostasy worked-in a phrase, which favours the doctrine of purgatory, the intercession of saints, or the efficacy of prayers for the dead; and what is worst of all, the interpretation is plausible. The original Hebrew might be forced into this meaning: and no other meaning seems to lie in it, none to hover above it in the heights of allegory, none to lurk beneath it even in the depths of cabala! This is the work of the tempter; it is a cloud of darkness conjured up between the truth of the sacred letters and the eyes of his understanding, by the malice of the evil one, and for a trial of his faith! Must he then at length confess, must he subscribe the name of Luther to an exposition which consecrates a weapon for the hand of the idolatrous hierarchy? Never! never!

There still remains one auxiliary in reserve, the translation of the Seventy. The Alexandrine Greeks, anterior to the Church itself, could intend no support to its cor-

ruptions—the Septuagint will have profaned the altar of truth with no incense for the nostrils of the universal bishop to snuff up. And here again his hopes are baffled! Exactly at this perplexed passage had the Greek translator given his understanding a holiday, and made his pen supply its place. O honoured Luther! as easily mightest thou convert the whole city of Rome, with the Pope and the conclave of Cardinals inclusively, as strike a spark of light from the words, and nothing but words, of the Alexandrine version. Disappointed, despondent, enraged, ceasing to think, yet continuing his brain on the stretch in solicitation of a thought; and gradually giving himself up to angry fancies, to recollections of past persecutions, to uneasy fears and inward defiance and floating images of the evil being, their supposed personal author; he sinks, without perceiving it, into a trance of slumber; during which his brain retains its waking energies, excepting that what would have been mere thoughts before, now—the action and counterweight of his senses and of their impressions being withdrawn—shape and condense themselves into things, into realities. Repeatedly half-wakening, and his eye-lids as often reclosing, the objects which really surround him form the place and scenery of his dream. All at once he sees the arch-fiend coming forth on the wall of the room, from the very spot, perhaps, on which his eyes had been fixed vacantly during the perplexed moments of his former meditation: the inkstand which he had at the same time been using, becomes associated with it: and in that struggle of rage, which in these distempered dreams almost constantly precedes the helpless terror by the pain of which we are finally awakened, he imagines that he hurls it at the intruder, or not improbably in the first instant of awakening, while yet both

his imagination and his eyes are possessed by the dream, he actually hurls it. Some weeks after, perhaps, during which interval he had often mused on the incident, undetermined whether to deem it a visitation of Satan to him in the body or out of the body, he discovers for the first time the dark spot on his wall, and receives it as a sign and pledge vouchsafed to him of the event having actually taken place.

Such was Luther under the influences of the age and country in and for which he was born. Conceive him a citizen of Geneva, and a contemporary of Voltaire: suppose the French language his mother-tongue, and the political and moral philosophy of English free-thinkers re-modelled by Parisian *fort esprits*, to have been the objects of his study;—conceive this change of circumstances, and Luther will no longer dream of fiends or of anti-Christ—but will he have no dreams in their place? His melancholy will have changed its drapery; but will it find no new costume wherewith to clothe itself? His impetuous temperament, his deep working mind, his busy and vivid imaginations—would they not have been a trouble to him in a world, where nothing was to be altered, where nothing was to obey his power, to cease to be that which it had been, in order to realize his preconceptions of what it ought to be? His sensibility, which found objects for itself, and shadows of human suffering in the harmless brute, and even in the flowers which he trod upon—might it not naturally, in an unspiritualized age, have wept, and trembled, and dissolved, over scenes of earthly passion, and the struggles of love with duty? His pity, that so easily passed into rage, would it not have found in the inequalities of mankind, in the oppressions of governments and the miseries of the governed, an entire instead of a divided object?

And might not a perfect constitution, a government of pure reason, a renovation of the social contract, have easily supplied the place of the reign of Christ in the new Jerusalem, of the restoration of the visible Church, and the union of all men by one faith in one charity? Henceforward, then, we will conceive his reason employed in building up anew the edifice of earthly society, and his imagination as pledging itself for the possible realization of the structure. We will lose the great reformer, who was born in an age which needed him, in the philosopher of Geneva, who was doomed to misapply his energies to materials the properties of which he misunderstood, and happy only that he did not live to witness the direful effects of his own system.

ESSAY III.

*Pectora cui credam? quis me lenire docebit
Mordaces curas, quis longas fallere noctes,
Ex quo summa dies tulerit Damona sub umbras?*

*Omnia paulatim consumit longior ætas,
Vivendoque simul morimur, repimurque manendo.*

*Ite tamen, lacrymæ! purum colis æthera, Damon!
Nec mihi conveniunt lacrymæ. Non omnia terre
Obruta! vivit amor, vivit dolor! ora negatur
Dulcia conspiciere: fere et meminisse relictum est.*

MILTON: PETRARCH: MILTON.

THE two following essays I devote to elucidation, the first of the theory of Luther's apparitions stated perhaps too briefly in the preceding essay; the second for the purpose of removing the only obstacle, which I can discover in the next section of the Friend, to the reader's ready comprehension of the principles, on which the arguments are grounded. First, I will endeavour to make my ghost theory more clear to those of my readers, who are fortunate enough to find it obscure in consequence of their own good health and unshattered nerves. The window of my library at Keswick is opposite to the fire-place, and looks out on the very large garden that occupies the whole slope of the hill on which the house stands. Consequently, the rays of light transmitted through the glass, that is, the rays from the garden, the opposite mountains, and the bridge, river, lake, and vale interjacent, and the rays, reflected from it, of the fire-place, &c., enter the eye at the same moment. At the

coming on (watch the burning in parts of the there was itself among and magnificence. For the fire less the twilight outward ob perfect lool side shelves of the room were lettered, as it were, on their backs with stars, more or fewer as the sky was less or more clouded, the rays of the stars being at that time the only ones transmitted. Now substitute the phantom from Luther's brain for the images of reflected light, the fire for instance, and the forms of his room and its furniture for the transmitted rays, and you have a fair resemblance of an apparition, and a just conception of the manner in which it is seen together with real objects. I have long wished to devote an entire work to the subject of dreams, visions, ghosts, and witchcraft, in which I might first give, and then endeavour to explain, the most interesting and best attested fact of each, which has come within my knowledge, either from books or from personal testimony. I might then explain in a more satisfactory way the mode in which our thoughts, in states of morbid slumber, become at times perfectly dramatic,—for in certain sorts of dreams the dullest might becomes a Shakespeare,—and by what law the form of the vision appears to talk to us its own thoughts in a voice as audible as the shape is visible ; and this too oftentimes in connected trains, and not seldom even

with a concentration of power which may easily impose on the soundest judgments, uninstructed in the optics and acoustics of the inner sense, for revelations and gifts of prescience. In aid of the present case, I will only remark, that it would appear incredible to persons not accustomed to these subtle notices of self-observation, what small and remote resemblances, what mere hints of likeness from some real external object, especially if the shape be aided by colour, will suffice to make a vivid thought consubstantiate with the real object, and derive from it an outward perceptibility. Even when we are broad awake, if we are in anxious expectation, how often will not the most confused sounds of nature be heard by us as articulate sounds? For instance, the babbling of a brook will appear for a moment the voice of a friend, for whom we are waiting, calling out our own names. A short meditation, therefore, on the great law of the imagination, that a likeness in part tends to become a likeness of the whole, will make it not only conceivable but probable, that the inkstand itself, and the dark-coloured stone on the wall, which Luther perhaps had never till then noticed, might have a considerable influence in the production of the fiend, and of the hostile act by which his obtrusive visit was repelled.

A lady once asked me if I believed in ghosts and apparitions. I answered with truth and simplicity: No madam! I have seen far too many myself. I have indeed a whole memorandum book filled with records of these *phenomena*, many of them interesting as facts and *data* for psychology, and affording some valuable materials for a theory of perception and its dependence on the memory and imagination. *In omnem actum perceptionis imaginatio influit efficienter*; says Wolfe. But he*

• Thomas Wedgwood.

is no more, who would have realized this idea: who had already established the foundations and the law of the theory; and for whom I had so often found a pleasure and a comfort, even during the wretched and restless nights of sickness, in watching and instantly recording these experiences of the world within us, of the *gemma natura, quæ fit et facit, et creat et creatur!* He is gone, my friend; my munificent co-patron, and not less the benefactor of my intellect!—He who beyond all other men known to me, added a fine and ever-wakeful sense of beauty to the most patient accuracy in experimental philosophy and the profounder research of metaphysical science; he who united all the play and spring of fancy with the subtlest discrimination and an inexorable judgment; and who controlled an almost painful exquisiteness of taste by a warmth of heart, which in the practical relations of life made allowances for faults as quickly as the moral taste detected them; a warmth of heart, which was indeed noble and pre-eminent, for alas! the genial feelings of health contributed no spark toward it. Of these qualities I may speak, for they belonged to all mankind.—The higher virtues, that were blessings to his friends, and the still higher that resided in and for his own soul, are themes for the energies of solitude, for the awfulness of prayer!—virtues exercised in the barrenness and desolation of his animal being; while he thirsted with the full stream at his lips, and yet with unwearyed goodness poured out to all around him, like the master of a feast among his kindred in the day of his own gladness! Were it but for the remembrance of him alone and of his lot here below, the disbelief of a future state would sadden the earth around me, and blight the very grass in the field.

ESSAY IV.

Χαλεπὸν, ὦ δαιμόνιε, μὴ παραδείγμασι χρώμενον, ἱκανῶς ἐνδείκνυσθαι
τι τῶν μειζόνων. κινδυνεύει γὰρ ἡμῶν ἕκαστος, οἷον ὄναρ, εἰδῶς ἕκαστα,
πάντ' αὖ πάλιν ὥσπερ ὑπάρ ἀγνοεῖν. ΠΛΑΤΟ, *Politicus*.

It is difficult, excellent friend! to make any comprehensive truth completely intelligible, unless we avail ourselves of an example. Otherwise we may, as in a dream, seem to know all, and then, as it were awaking, find that we know nothing.

AMONG my earliest impressions I still distinctly remember that of my first entrance into the mansion of a neighbouring baronet, awfully known to me by the name of the great house,* its exterior having been long connected in my childish imagination with the feelings and fancies stirred up in me by the perusal of the Arabian Nights' Entertainments.† Beyond all other objects, I was most struck with the magnificent staircase, relieved at well proportioned intervals by spacious landing-places, this adorned with grand or showy plants, the next looking out on an extensive prospect through the stately window

* Escot, near Ottery St. Mary, Devon, then the seat of Sir George Young, and since burnt down in 1808.—*Ed.*

† As I had read one volume of these tales over and over again before my fifth birth-day, it may be readily conjectured of what sort these fancies and feelings must have been. The book, I well remember, used to lie in a corner of the parlour window at my dear father's vicarage-house: and I can never forget with what a strange mixture of obscure dread and intense desire I used too look at the volume and watch it, till the morning sunshine had reached and nearly covered it, when, and not before, I felt the courage given me to seize the precious treasure and hurry off with it to some sunny corner in our play-ground.

with its side panes of rich blues and saturated amber or orange tints: while from the last and highest the eye commanded the whole spiral ascent with the marble pavement of the great hall, from which it seemed to spring up as if it merely used the ground on which it rested. My readers will find no difficulty in translating these forms of the outward senses into their intellectual analogies, so as to understand the purport of The Friend's landing-places, and the objects I proposed to myself, in the small groups of essays in posed under this title between the main divisions of the work.

My best powers would have sunk with me, had I not soothed my solitary toils with the anticipation of many readers—(whether during my life, or when my grave shall have shamed my detractors into a sympathy with its own silence, formed no part in this self-flattery)—who would submit to any reasonable trouble rather than read, ‘as in a dream seeming to know all, to find on awaking that they know nothing.’ Having, therefore, in the three preceding essays selected from my conservatory a few plants, of somewhat gayer petals and a livelier green, though like the geranium tribe of a sober character in the whole physiognomy and odour, I shall first devote a few sentences to a catalogue of my introductory lucubrations, and the remainder of the essay to the prospect, as far as it can be seen distinctly from our present site. Within a short distance, several ways meet: and at that point only does it appear to me that the reader will be in danger of mistaking the road. Dropping the metaphor, I would say that there is one term, reason; the meaning of which has become unsettled, To different persons it conveys a different notion, and not seldom to the same person at different times; while the force, and to a certain extent, the intelligibility of

the following sections depend on its being interpreted one sense exclusively.

Essays I. to IV. inclusively convey the design and contents of the work; my judgment respecting the style and my defence of myself from the charges of arrogance and presumption. Say rather, that such are the person threads of the discourse: for it will not have escaped the reader's observation, that even in these prefatory pages principles and truths of general interest form the true contents, and that amid all the usual compliments and courtesies of a first presentation to the reader's acquaintance the substantial object is still to assert the practicability, without disguising the difficulties, of improving the morals of mankind by a direct appeal to their understandings; to show the distinction between attention and thought, and the necessity of the former as a habit of discipline without which the very world, thinking, must remain a thoughtless substitute for dreaming with our eyes open; and lastly, the tendency of a certain fashionable style with all its accommodations to paralyse the very faculties of manly intellect by a series of petty stimulants. After this preparation, I proceed at once to lay the foundations common to the whole work, by an inquiry into the duty of communicating truth, and the conditions under which it may be communicated with safety, from Essay V. to XVI. inclusively. Each essay, I believe, be found complete in itself, yet an organic part of the whole considered as one disquisition. First the inexpediency of pious frauds is proved from history; the shameless assertion of the indifference of truth and falsehood exposed to its deserved infamy, and an answer given to the objection derived from the impossibility of conveying an adequate notion of the truths, we mean to attempt to communicate. The conditions are the

detailed, under which, right though inadequate notions may be taught without danger, and proofs given, both from facts and from reason, that he, who fulfils the conditions required by conscience, takes the surest way of answering the purposes of prudence. This is, indeed, the main characteristic of the moral system taught by The Friend throughout, that the distinct foresight consequences belongs exclusively to the infinite Wisdom which is one with that Almighty Will, on which all consequences depend; but that for man—to obey the simple unconditional commandment of eschewing every evil that implies a self-contradiction, or, in other words, to produce and maintain the greatest possible harmony in the component impulses and faculties of his nature, involves the effects of prudence. It is as it were, prudence in short-hand or cypher. A pure conscience, that inward something, that *θεὸς οἰκτιρὸς*, which being absolutely unique no man can describe, because every man is bound to know, and even in the eye of the law is held to be a person no longer than he may be supposed to know it—the conscience, I say, bears the same relation to God, as an accurate time-piece bears to the sun. The time-piece merely indicates the relative path of the sun, yet we can regulate our plans and proceedings by it with the same confidence as if it was itself the efficient cause of light, heat, and the revolving seasons: on the self-evident axiom, that in whatever sense two things—for instance, A. and C. D. E.,—are both equal to a third thing, B., they are in the same sense equal to each other. Cunning is circuitous folly. In plain English, to act the knave is but a round-about way of playing the fool; and the man, who will not permit himself to call an action by its proper name without a previous calculation of all its probable consequences, may be indeed only a coxcomb,

who is looking at his fingers through an opera glass ; but he runs no small risk of becoming a knave. The chances are against him. Though he should begin by calculating the consequences with regard to others, yet by the mere habit of never contemplating an action in its own proportions and immediate relations to his moral being, it is scarcely possible but that he must end in selfishness : for the 'you,' and the 'they' will stand on different occasions for a thousand different persons, while the 'I' is one only, and recurs in every calculation. Or grant that the principle of expediency should prompt to the same outward deeds as are commanded by the law of reason ; yet the doer himself is debased. But if it be replied, that the re-action on the agent's own mind is to form a part of the calculation, then it is a rule that destroys itself in the very propounding, as will be more fully demonstrated in the second or ethical division of *The Friend*, when I shall have detected and exposed the equivocal between an action and a series of motions, by which the determinations of the will are to be realised in the world of the senses. What modification of the latter corresponds to the former, and is entitled to be called by the same name, will often depend on time, place, persons, and circumstances, the consideration of which requires an exertion of the judgment ; but the action itself remains the same, and like all other ideas pre-exists in the reason, or in the more expressive and perhaps more precise and philosophical language of St. Paul, in the spirit, unalterable because unconditional, or with no other than that most awful condition, *as sure as God liveth, it is so!*

These remarks are inserted in this place, because the principle admits of easiest illustration in the instance of veracity and the actions connected with the same, and may then be intelligibly applied to other departments of

morality, all of which Woollston indeed considers as only so many different forms of truth and falsehood. So far I treated of oral communication of the truth. The applicability of the same principle is then tried and affirmed in publications by the press, first as between the individual and his own conscience, and then between the publisher and the state: and under this head I have considered at large the questions of a free press and the law of libel, the anomalies and peculiar difficulties of the latter, and the only possible solution compatible with the continuance of the former: a solution rising out of and justified by the necessarily anomalous and unique nature of the law itself. I confess that I look back on this discussion concerning the press and its limits with a satisfaction unusual to me in the review of my own labours: and if the date of their first publication (September, 1809) be remembered, it will not perhaps be denied on an impartial comparison, that I have treated this most important subject, so especially interesting in the present time, more fully and more systematically than it had up to that time been. *Interim tum recti conscientia, tum illo me consolor, quod optimis quibusque cerle non improbamur, forlassis omnibus placituri, simul atque livor ab obitu conquieverit.*

Lastly, the subject is concluded even as it commenced, and as beseeemed a disquisition placed as the steps and vestibule of the whole work, with an enforcement of the absolute necessity of principles grounded in reason as the basis or rather as the living root of all genuine expedience. Where these are despised or at best regarded as aliens from the actual business of life, and consigned to the ideal world of speculative philosophy and Utopian politics, instead of state wisdom we shall have state-craft, and for the talent of the governor the cleverness of an

embarrassed spendthrift—which consists in tricks to shift off difficulties and dangers when they are close upon us, and to keep them at arm's length, not in solid and grounded courses to preclude or subdue them. We must content ourselves with expedient-makers—with fire-engines against fires, life-boats against inundations; but no houses built fire-proof, no dams that rise above the water-mark. The reader will have observed that already has the term, reason, been frequently contradistinguished from the understanding and the judgment. If I could succeed in fully explaining the sense in which the word reason is employed by me, and in satisfying the reader's mind concerning the grounds and importance of the distinction, I should feel little or no apprehension concerning the intelligibility of these essays from first to last. The following section is in part founded on this distinction: the which remaining obscure, all else will be so as a system, however clear the component paragraphs may be, taken separately. In the appendix* to my first Lay Sermon, I have, indeed, treated the question at considerable length, but chiefly in relation to the heights of theology and metaphysics. In the next number I attempt to explain myself more popularly, and trust that with no great expenditure of attention the reader will satisfy his mind, that our remote ancestors spoke as men acquainted with the constituent parts of their own moral and intellectual being, when they described one man as 'being out of his senses,' another as 'out of his wits,' or 'deranged in his understanding,' and a third as having 'lost his reason.' Observe, the understanding may be deranged, weakened, or perverted; but the reason is either lost or not lost, that is, wholly present or wholly absent.

* The third essay, erroneously lettered B.—Ed.

ESSAY V.

Man may rather be defined a religious than a rational creature, in regard that in other creatures there may be something of reason, but there is nothing of religion.

HARRINGTON.

If the reader will substitute the word "understanding" for "reason," and the word "reason" for "religion," Harrington has here completely expressed the truth for which I am contending. Man may rather be defined a rational than an intelligent creature, in regard that in other creatures there may be something of understanding, but there is nothing of reason. But that this was Harrington's meaning is evident. Otherwise, instead of comparing two faculties with each other, he would contrast a faculty with one of its own objects, which would involve the same absurdity as if he had said, that man might rather be defined an astronomical than a seeing animal, because other animals possessed the sense of sight, but were incapable of beholding the satellites of Saturn, or the *nebulae* of fixed stars. If further confirmation be necessary, it may be supplied by the following reflections, the leading thought of which I remember to have read in the works of a continental philosopher. It should seem easy to give the definite distinction of the reason from the understanding, because we constantly imply it when we speak of the difference between ourselves and the brute creation. No one, except as a figure

of speech, ever speaks of an animal reason; * but that many animals possess a share of understanding, perfectly distinguishable from mere instinct, we all allow. Few persons have a favourite dog without making instances of its intelligence an occasional topic of conversation. They call for our admiration of the individual animal, and not with exclusive reference to the wisdom in nature, as in the case of the *στοργή*, or maternal instinct of beasts; or of the hexangular cells of the bees, and the wonderful coincidence of this form with the geometrical demonstration of the largest possible number of rooms in a given space. Likewise, we distinguish various degrees of understanding there, and even discover from inductions supplied by the zoologists, that the understanding appears, as a general rule, in an inverse proportion to the instinct. We hear little or nothing of the instincts of the "half-reasoning elephant," and as little of the understanding of caterpillars and butterflies.† But reason is wholly

* I have this moment looked over a translation of Blumenbach's *Physiology* by Dr. Elliottson, which forms a glaring exception, p. 45. I do not know Dr. Elliottson, but I do know Professor Blumenbach, and was an assiduous attendant on the lectures, of which this classical work was the text-book: and I know that that good and great man would start back with surprise and indignation at the gross materialism mortised on to his work: the more so because during the whole period, in which the identification of man with the brute in kind was the fashion of naturalists, Blumenbach remained ardent and instant in controverting the opinion, and exposing its fallacy and falsehood, both as a man of sense and as a naturalist. I may truly say, that it was uppermost in his heart and foremost in his speech. Therefore, and from no hostile feeling to Dr. Elliottson, (whom I hear spoken of with great regard and respect, and to whom I myself give credit for his manly openness in the avowal of his opinions,) I have felt the present animadversion a duty of justice as well as gratitude.

April 8, 1817.

† Note, that though "reasoning" does not in our language, in the lax use of words natural in conversation or popular writings, imply scientific conclusion, yet the phrase "half-reasoning" is evidently used by Pope as a poetic hyperbole.

denied, equally to the highest as to the lowest of the brutes; otherwise it must be wholly attributed to them, and with it therefore self-consciousness, and personality, or moral being. 81

I should have no objection to define reason with Jacobi, and with his friend Hemsterhuis, as an organ bearing the same relation to spiritual objects, the universal, the eternal, and the necessary, as the eye bears to material and contingent *phenomena*. But then it must be added, that it is an organ identical with its appropriate objects. Thus, God, the soul, eternal truth, &c., are the objects of reason; but they are themselves reason. The name God the Supreme Reason; and Milton says,—

—whence the soul
Reason receives, and reason is her being.*

Whatever is conscious self-knowledge is reason: and in this sense it may be safely defined the organ of the supersensuous; even as the understanding wherever it does not possess or use the reason, as its inward eye, may be defined the conception of the sensuous, or the faculty by which we generalize and arrange the *phenomena* of perception; that faculty, the functions of which contain the rules and constitute the possibility of outward experience. In short, the understanding supposes something that is understood. This may be merely its own acts or forms, that is, formal logic; but real objects, the materials of substantial knowledge, must be furnished, I might safely say revealed, to it by organs of sense. The understanding of the higher brutes has only organs of outward sense, and consequently material objects only; but man's understanding has likewise an organ of inward sense,

and therefore the power of acquainting itself with invisible realities or spiritual objects. This organ is his reason.

Again, the understanding and experience may exist * without reason. But reason cannot exist without understanding; nor does it or can it manifest itself but in and through the understanding, which in our elder writers is often called discourse, or the discursive faculty, as by Hooker, Lord Bacon, and Hobbes: and an understanding enlightened by reason Shakespeare gives as the contradistinguishing character of man, under the name "discourse of reason." In short, the human understanding possesses two distinct organs, the outward sense, and the mind's eye, which is reason: wherever we use that phrase, the "mind's eye," in its proper sense, and not as a mere synonyme of the memory or the fancy. In this way we reconcile the promise of revelation, that the blessed will see God, with the declaration of St. John, *No man hath seen God at any time.*†

I will add one other illustration to prevent any misconception, as if I were dividing the human soul into different essences, or ideal persons. In this piece of steel I acknowledge the properties of hardness, brittleness, high polish, and the capability of forming a mirror. I find all these likewise in the plate glass of a friend's carriage; but in addition to all these I find the quality of transparency, or the power of transmitting, as well

* Of this no one would feel inclined to doubt, who had seen the poodle dog, whom the celebrated BLUMENBACH, — a name so dear to science, as a physiologist and comparative anatomist, and not less dear as a man to all Englishmen who have ever resided at Göttingen in the course of their education, — trained up, not only to hatch the eggs of the hen with all the mother's care and patience, but to attend the chickens afterwards, and find the food for them. I have myself known a Newfoundland dog, who watched and guarded a family of young children with all the intelligence of a nurse, during their walks.

† 1 Ep. iv. 12. — Ed.

as of reflecting, the rays of light. The application is obvious.

If the reader therefore will take the trouble of bearing in mind these and the following explanations, he will have removed before hand every possible difficulty from The Friend's political section. For there is another use of the word, reason, arising out of the former indeed, but less definite, and more exposed to misconception. In this latter use it means the understanding considered as using the reason, so far as by the organ of reason only we possess the ideas of the necessary and the universal; and this is the more common use of the word, when it is applied with any attempt at clear and distinct conceptions. In this narrower and derivative sense the best definition of reason, which I can give, will be found in the third member of the following sentence, in which the understanding is described in its three-fold operation, and from each receives an appropriate name. The sense,—*vis sensitiva vel intuitiva*—perceives: *vis regulatrix*—the understanding, in its own peculiar operation—conceives: *vis rationalis*—the reason or rationalized understanding—comprehends. The first is impressed through the organs of sense; the second combines these multifarious impressions into individual notions, and by reducing these notions to rules, according to the analogy of all its former notices, constitutes experience: the third subordinates both of them, the notions, namely, and the rules of experience, to absolute principles or necessary laws: and thus concerning objects, which our experience has proved to have real existence, it demonstrates, moreover, in what way they are possible, and in doing this constitutes science. Reason therefore, in this secondary sense, and used, not as a spiritual organ, but as a faculty, namely, the understanding or soul enlightened by that organ,—

reason, I say, or the scientific faculty, is the intellection of the possibility or essential properties of things by means of the laws that constitute them. Thus the rational idea of a circle is that of a figure constituted by the circumvolution of a straight line with its one end fixed.

Every man must feel, that though he may not be exerting different faculties, he is exerting his faculties in a ~~different way~~, when in one instance he begins with some one self-evident truth,—that the *radii* of a circle, for instance, are all equal,—and in consequence of this being true sees at once, without any actual experience, that some other thing must be true likewise, and that, this being true, some third thing must be equally true, and so on till he comes, we will say, to the properties of the lever, considered as the spoke of a circle; which is capable of having all its marvellous powers demonstrated even to a savage who had never seen a lever, and without supposing any other previous knowledge in his mind, but this one, that there is a conceivable figure, all possible lines from the middle to the circumference of which are of the same length, or when, in another instance, he brings together the facts of experience, each of which has its own separate value, neither increased nor diminished by the truth of any other fact which may have preceded it; and making these several facts bear upon some particular project, and finding some in favour of it, and some against it, determines for or against the project, according as one or the other class of facts preponderate: as, for example, whether it would be better to plant a particular spot of ground with larch, or with Scotch fir, or with oak in preference to either. Surely every man will acknowledge, that his mind was very differently employed in the first case from what it was in the second.

and all men have agreed to call the results of the first class the truths of science, such as not only are true, but which it is impossible to conceive otherwise: while the results of the second class are called facts, or things of experience: and as to these latter we must often content ourselves with the greater probability, that they are so or so, rather than otherwise—nay, even when we have no doubt that they are so in the particular case, we never presume to assert that they must continue so always, and under all circumstances. On the contrary, our conclusions depend altogether on constant circumstances. Now when the mind is employed in the case first mentioned, I call it reasoning, ~~the use of the pure~~ reason; but, in the second case, the understanding or prudence.

This reason, applied to the motives of our conduct, and combined with the sense of our moral responsibility, is the conditional cause of conscience, which is a spiritual sense or testifying state of the coincidence or discordance of the free will with the reason. But as the reasoning consists wholly in a man's power of seeing, whether any two conceptions which happen to be in his mind, are, or are not in contradiction to each other, it follows of necessity, not only that all men have reason, but that every man has it in the same degree. For reasoning, or reason, in this its secondary sense, does not consist in the conceptions themselves or in their clearness, but simply, when they are in the mind, in seeing whether they contradict each other or no.

And again, as in the determinations of conscience the only knowledge required is that of my own intention—whether in doing such a thing, instead of leaving it undone, I did what I should think right if any other person had done it; it follows that in the mere question

of guilt or innocence, all men have not only reason equally, but likewise all the materials on which the reason, considered as conscience, is to work. But when we pass out of ourselves, and speak, not exclusively of the agent as meaning well or ill, but of the action in its consequences, then of course experience is required, judgment in making use of it, and all those other qualities of the mind which are so differently dispensed to different persons, both by nature and education. And though the reason itself is the same in all men, yet the means of exercising it, and the materials,—that is, the facts and conceptions—on which it is exercised, being possessed in very different degrees by different persons, the practical result is, of course, equally different—and the whole ground work of Rousseau's philosophy ends in a mere nothingism.—Even in that branch of knowledge, where the conceptions, on the congruity of which with each other, the reason is to decide, are all possessed alike by all men, namely in geometry;—for all men in their senses possess all the component images, namely simple curves and straight lines; yet the power of attention required for the perception of linked truths, even of such truths, is so very different in A and in B, that Sir Isaac Newton professed that it was in this power only that he was superior to ordinary men. In short, the sophism is as gross as if I should say,—the souls of all men have the faculty of sight in an equal degree—forgetting to add, that this faculty cannot be exercised without eyes, and that some men are blind and others short-sighted,—and should then take advantage of this my omission to conclude against the use or necessity of spectacles, and microscopes,—or of choosing the sharpest sighted men for our guides.

Having exposed this gross sophism, I must warn

against an opposite error—namely, that if reason, as distinguished from prudence, consists merely in knowing that black cannot be white—or when a man has a clear conception of an inclosed figure, and another equally clear conception of a straight line, his reason teaches him that these two conceptions are incompatible in the same object, that is, that two straight lines cannot include a space—the reason must therefore be a very insignificant faculty. For a moment's steady self-reflection will shew us, that in the simple determination 'black is not white'—or, 'that two straight lines cannot include a space'—all the powers are implied, that distinguish man from animals;—first, the power of reflection—2d, of comparison—3d, and therefore of suspension of the mind—4th, therefore of a controlling will, and the power of acting from notions, instead of mere images exciting appetites; from motives, and not from mere dark instincts. Was it an insignificant thing to weigh the planets, to determine all their courses, and prophesy every possible relation of the heavens a thousand years hence? Yet all this mighty chain of science is nothing but a linking together of truths of the same kind, as, the whole is greater than its part;—or, if A and $B=C$, then $A=B$: or $3+4=7$, therefore $7+5=12$, and so forth. X is to be found either in A , or B , or C , or D : it is not found in A , B , or C ; therefore it is to be found in D .—What can be simpler? Apply this to a brute animal. A dog misses his master where four roads meet;—he has come up one, smells to two of the others, and then with his head aloft darts forward to the fourth road without any examination. If this were done by a conclusion, the dog would have reason;—how comes it then, that he never shews it in his ordinary habits? Why does this story excite either wonder or incredulity?—If the story be a

fact, and not a fiction, I should say—the breeze brought his master's scent down the fourth road to the dog's nose, and that therefore he did not put it down to the road, as in the two former instances. So awful and almost miraculous does the simple act of concluding, that 'take three from four, there remains one,' appear to us, when attributed to one of the most sagacious of all brute animals.

THE FRIEND.

SECTION THE FIRST.

ON THE PRINCIPLES OF POLITICAL KNOWLEDGE.

*Hoc potissimum pacto felicem ac magnum regem ac fore judicans,
non si quam plurimis sed si quam optimis imperet. Proinde parum
esse putat justis præsidiis regnum suum munire, nisi idem viris
eruditione juxta ac vitæ integritate præcellentibus ditet atque honestet.
Nimirum intelligit hæc demum esse vera regni decora, has veras opes.*

ERASMUS : EPIST. AD EPISC. PARIS.



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THE FRIEND.

ESSAY I.

Dum politici sepiusculum hominibus magis insinuantur quam consulunt, potius callidi quam sapientes; theoretici a contrario se rem divinam facere et sapientiae culmen attingere credunt, quando humanam naturam, quæ nullibi est, multis modis laudare, et eam, quæ vera est, dictis lacessere norunt. Unde factum est, ut nunquam politicum conceperint quæ possit ad usum revocari; sed quæ in Utopia vel in illo poetarum aureo saculo, ubi scilicet minime necesse erat, institui potuisset. At mihi plane persuado, experientiam omnia civitatum genera, quæ concipi possunt ut homines concorditer vivant, et simul media, quibus multitudo dirigi, seu quibus intra certos limites contineri debeat, ostendisse: ita ut non credam, nos posse aliquid, quod ab experientia sive praxi non abhorreat, cogitatione de hac re assequi, quod nondum expertum compertumque sit.

Cum igitur animum ad politicam applicuimus, nihil quod novum vel inauditum est; sed tantum ea quæ cum praxi optime conveniunt, certa et indubitata ratione demonstrare aut ex ipsa humanæ naturæ conditione deducere, intendi. Et ut ea quæ ad hanc scientiam spectant, eadem animi libertate, qua res mathematicas solemus, inquirerem, sedulo curari humanas actiones non ridere, non lugere, neque detestari; sed intelligere. Nec ad imperii securitatem refert quo animo homines inducantur ad res recte administrandas, modo res recte administrentur. Animi enim libertas, seu fortitudo, privata virtus est; at imperii virtus securitas.

SPINOSA Op. Post. p. 267.

While the mere practical statesman too often rather plots against mankind, than consults their interest, crafty, not wise; the mere theorists, on the other hand, imagine that they are employed in a glorious work, and believe themselves at the very summit of earthly wisdom, when they are able, in set and varied language, to extol that human nature, which exists no where, except indeed in their own fancy, and to accuse and vilify our nature as it really is. Hence it has happened, that these men have never conceived a practical scheme of civil policy, but, at best, such forms of government only, as might have

been instituted in Utopia, or during the golden age of the poets : that is to say, forms of government excellently adapted for those who need no government at all. But I am fully persuaded, that experience has already brought to light all conceivable sorts of political institutions under which human society can be maintained in concord, and likewise the chief means of directing the multitude, or retaining them within given boundaries : so that I can hardly believe, that on this subject the deepest research would arrive at any result, not abhorrent from experience and practice, which has not been already tried and proved.

When, therefore, I applied my thoughts to the study of political philosophy, I proposed to myself nothing original or strange as the fruits of my reflections ; but simply to demonstrate from plain and undoubted principles, or to deduce from the very condition and necessities of human nature, those plans and maxims which square the best with practice. And that in all things which relate to this province, I might conduct my investigations with the same freedom of intellect with which we proceed in questions of pure science, I sedulously disciplined my mind neither to laugh at, nor bewail, nor detest, the actions of men ; but to understand them. For to the safety of the state it is not of necessary importance, what motives induce men to administer public affairs rightly, provided only that public affairs be rightly administered.* For moral strength, or freedom from the selfish passions, is the virtue of individuals ; but security is the virtue of a state.

ON THE PRINCIPLES OF POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY.

ALL the different philosophical systems of political justice, all the theories on the rightful origin of government, are reducible in the end to three classes, correspondent to the three different points of view, in which the human being itself may be contemplated. The first denies all truth and distinct meaning to the words, right and duty ; and affirming that the human mind consists of nothing but manifold modifications of passive sensation, considers men as the highest sort of animals indeed, but at the same time the most wretched ; inasmuch as their defenceless nature forces them into society : while such is the multiplicity of wants engendered by the

* I regret, that I should have given, by thus selecting it for my motto, an implied consent to this very plausible, but false and dangerous position. 1830.

social state, that the wishes of one are sure to be in contradiction to those of some other. The assertors of this system consequently ascribe the origin and continuance of government to fear, or the power of the stronger, aided by the force of custom. This is the system of Hobbes. Its statement is its confutation. It is, indeed, in the literal sense of the word preposterous for fear presupposes conquest, and conquest a pre as union and agreement between the conquerors. A empire may perhaps be governed by fear; at least the supposition is not absolutely inconceivable, under circumstances which prevent the consciousness of a common strength. A million of men united by mutual confidence and free intercourse of thoughts form one power, and this is as much a real thing as a steam engine; but a million of insulated individuals is only an abstraction of the mind, and but one told so many times over without addition, as an idiot would tell the clock at noon—one, one, one. But when, in the first instances, the descendants of one family joined together to attack those of another family, it is impossible that their chief or leader should have appeared to them stronger than all the rest together; they must therefore have chosen him, and this as for particular purposes, so doubtless under particular conditions, expressed or understood. Such we know to be the case with the North American tribes at present; such, we are informed by history, was the case with our own remote ancestors. Therefore, even on the system of those who, in contempt of the oldest and most authentic records, consider the savage as the first and natural state of man, government must have originated in choice and an agreement. The apparent exceptions in Africa and Asia are, if possible, still more subversive of this system: for they will be found to have originated in religious im-

posture, and the first chiefs to have secured a willing and enthusiastic obedience to themselves as delegates of the Deity.

But the whole theory is baseless. We are told by history, we learn from our experience, we know from our own hearts, that fear, of itself, is utterly incapable of producing any regular, continuous, and calculable effect, even on an individual; and that the fear, which does act systematically upon the mind, always presupposes a sense of duty, as its cause. The most cowardly of the European nations, the Neapolitans and Sicilians, those among whom the fear of death exercises the most tyrannous influence relatively to their own persons, are the very men who least fear to take away the life of a fellow-citizen by poison or assassination; while in Great Britain, a tyrant, who has abused the power, which a vast property has given him, to oppress a whole neighbourhood, can walk in safety unarmed and unattended, amid a hundred men, each of whom feels his heart burn with rage and indignation at the sight of him. It was this man who broke my father's heart; or, it is through him that my children are clad in rags, and cry for the food which I am no longer able to provide for them. And yet they dare not touch a hair of his head! Whence does this arise? Is it from a cowardice of sensibility that makes the injured man shudder at the thought of shedding blood? Or from a cowardice of selfishness which makes him afraid of hazarding his own life? Neither the one nor the other! The field of Waterloo, as the most recent of a hundred equal proofs, has borne witness that,—

—bring a *Bruton* frae his hill,

Say, such is royal George's will,
An' there's the foe,

He has nae thought but how to kill
Twa at a blow.

Nae cauld, faint-hearted doubtings tease him ;
Death comes, wi' fearless eye he sees him ;
Wi' bluidy hand, a welcome gies him ;
 And when he fa's,
His latest draught o' breathin leaves him
 In faint huzzas.*

Whence then arises the difference of feeling in the former case? To what does the oppressor owe his safety? To the spirit-quelling thought;—the laws of God and of my country have made his life sacred! I dare not touch a hair of his head!—'Tis conscience that makes cowards of us all,—but oh! it is conscience too which makes heroes of us all.

* Burns.—Ed.

ESSAY II.

*Le plus fort n'est jamais assez fort pour être toujours le
s'il ne transforme sa force en droit et l'obéissance en devoir.*

ROUS

*Viribus parantur provincia, jure retinentur. Igñtur b
gaudium, quippe Germani victi magis, quam domiti.*

FLORUS, iv.

The strongest is never strong enough to be always the master:
he transforms his power into right, and obedience into duty.

Provinces are taken by force, but they are kept by right
exultation therefore was of brief continuance, inasmuch as the G
had been overcome, but not subdued.

A TRULY great man,† the best and greatest publi
cacter that I had ever the opportunity of making
acquainted with,—on assuming the command of a
of-war, found a mutinous crew, more than one h
them uneducated Irishmen, and of the remaind
small portion had become sailors by compromise of p
ment. What terror could effect by severity and freq
of acts of discipline, had been already effected.
what was this effect? Something like that of a
winter on a flask of brandy. The furious spirit ex
tered itself with tenfold strength at the heart;
violence was changed into secret plots and conspir
and the consequent orderliness of the crew, as far a
were orderly, was but the brooding of a tempest.

* Slightly altered.—Ed.

† Sir Alexander Ball.—Ed.

new commander instantly commenced a system of discipline as near as possible to that of ordinary law ;—as much as possible, he avoided, in his own person, the appearance of any will or arbitrary power to vary, or to remit, punishment. The rules to be observed were affixed to a conspicuous part of the ship, with the particular penalties for the breach of each particular rule ; and care was taken that every individual of the ship should know and understand this code. With a single exception in the case of mutinous behaviour, a space of twenty-four hours was appointed between the first charge and the second hearing of the cause, at which time the accused person was permitted and required to bring forward whatever he thought conducive to his defence or palliation. If, as was commonly the case—for the officers well knew that the commander would seriously resent in them all caprice of will, and by no means permit to others what he denied to himself,—no answer could be returned to the three questions—Did you not commit the act ? Did you not know that it was in contempt of such a rule, and in defiance of such a punishment ? And was it not wholly in your own power to have obeyed the one and avoided the other ?—the sentence was then passed with the greatest solemnity, and another, but shorter, space of time was again interposed between it and its actual execution. During this space the feelings of the commander, as a man, were so well blended with his inflexibility, as the organ of the law ; and how much he suffered previously to and during the execution of the sentence was so well known to the crew, that it became a common saying with them when a sailor was about to be punished, the captain takes it more to heart than the fellow himself. *But whenever the commander perceived any trait of pride in the offender, or the germs of any noble feeling, he lost*

no opportunity of saying, "It is not the pain that you are about to suffer which grieves me! You are none of you, I trust, such cowards as to turn faint-hearted at the thought of that! but that, being a man, and one who is to fight for his king and country, you should have made it necessary to treat you as a vicious beast,—it is that that grieves me."

I have been assured, both by a gentleman who was lieutenant on board that ship at the time when the heroism of its captain, aided by his characteristic calmness and foresight, greatly influenced the decision of the most glorious battle recorded in the annals of our naval history, and very recently by a grey-headed sailor, who did not even know my name, or could have suspected that I was previously acquainted with the circumstances—I have been assured, I say, that the success of this plan was such as astonished the oldest officers, and convinced the most incredulous. Ruffians, who, like the old Buccaneers, had been used to inflict torture on themselves for sport, or in order to harden themselves beforehand, were tamed and overpowered, how or why they themselves knew not. From the fiercest spirits were heard the most earnest entreaties for the forgiveness of their commander: before the punishment, for it was too well known that then they would have been to no purpose, but days after it, when the bodily pain was remembered but as a dream. An invisible power it was, that quelled them, a power which was therefore irresistible, because it took away the very will of resisting. It was the awful power of the law acting on natures pre-configured to its influences. The faculty was appealed to in the offender's own being, the faculty and a presence, of which he had not been previously made aware,—but it answered to the appeal; its real existence therefore could not be doubted, or its

rendered inaudible; and the very struggle of the wilder passions to keep uppermost counteracted their own purpose, by wasting in internal contest that energy which before had acted in its entirety on external resistance or provocation. Strength may be met with strength; the power of inflicting pain may be baffled by the pride of endurance; the eye of rage may be answered by the stare of defiance, or the downcast look of dark and revengeful resolve; and with all this there is an outward and determined object to which the mind can attach its passions and purposes, and bury its own disquietudes in the full occupation of the senses. But who dares struggle with an invisible combatant,—with an enemy which exists and makes us know its existence—but where it is, we ask in vain?—No space contains it—time promises no control over it—it has no ear for my threats—it has no substance, that my hands can grasp, or my weapons find vulnerable—it commands and cannot be commanded—it acts and is insusceptible of my re-action—the more I strive to subdue it, the more am I compelled to think of it—and the more I think of it, the more do I find it to possess a reality out of myself, and not to be a phantom of my own imagination; that all, but the most abandoned men, acknowledge its authority, and that the whole strength and majesty of my country are pledged to support it; and yet that for me its power is the same with that of my own permanent self, and that all the choice, which is permitted to me, consists in having it for my guardian angel or my avenging fiend! This is the spirit of law! the lute of Amphion, the harp of Orpheus! This is the true necessity, which compels man into the social state, now and always, by a still-beginning, never-ceasing, force of moral cohesion.

Thus is man to be governed, and thus only can he be

governed. For from his creation the objects of his senses were to become his subjects, and the task allotted to him was to subdue the visible world within the sphere of action circumscribed by those senses, as far as they could act in concert. What the eye beholds, the hand strives to reach; what it reaches, it conquers, and makes the instrument of further conquest. ~~We can be subdued by that alone which is analogous in kind to that by which we subdue: therefore by the invisible powers of our nature, whose immediate presence is disclosed to our inner sense, and only as the symbols and language of which all shapes and modifications of matter become formidable to us.~~

A machine continues to move by the force which first set it in motion. If only the smallest number in any state, properly so called, hold together through the influence of any fear that does not itself pre-suppose the sense of duty, it is evident that the state itself could not have commenced through animal fear. We hear, indeed, of conquests; but how does history represent these? Almost without exception as the substitution of one set of governors for another: and so far is the conqueror from relying on fear alone to secure the obedience of the conquered, that his first step is to demand an oath of fealty from them, by which he would impose upon them the belief, that they become subjects: for who would think of administering an oath to a gang of slaves? But what can make the difference between slave and subject, if not the existence of an implied contract in the one case, and not in the other? And to what purpose would a contract serve, if, however it might be entered into through fear, it were deemed binding only in consequence of fear? To repeat my former illustration—where fear alone is relied on, as in a slave ship, the chains that bind

the poor victims must be material chains: for these only can act upon feelings which have their source wholly in the material organization. Hobbes has said, that laws without the sword are but bits of parchment. How far this is true, every honest man's heart will best tell him, if he will content himself with asking his own heart, and not falsify the answer by his notions concerning the hearts of other men. But were it true, still the fair answer would be—Well! but without the laws the sword is but a piece of iron. The wretched tyrant, who disgraces the present age and human nature itself, had exhausted the whole magazine of animal terror, in order to consolidate his truly Satanic government. But look at the new French catechism, and in it read the misgivings of his mind, as to the sufficiency of terror alone! The system, which I have been confuting, is indeed so inconsistent with the facts revealed to us by our own mind, and so utterly unsupported by any facts of history, that I should be censurable in wasting my own time and my reader's patience by the exposure of its falsehood, but that the arguments adduced have a value of themselves independently of their present application. Else it would have been an ample and satisfactory reply to an assertor of this bestial theory:—Government is a thing which relates to men, and what you say applies only to beasts.

Before I proceed to the second of these systems, let me remove a possible misunderstanding that may have arisen from the use of the word contract: as if I had asserted, that the whole duty of obedience to governors is derived from, and dependent on, the fact of an original contract. I freely admit, that to make this the cause and origin of political obligation, is not only a dangerous but an absurd theory; for what could give moral force to the contract?

The same sense of duty which binds us to keep it, must have pre-existed as impelling us to make it. For what man in his senses would regard the faithful observation of a contract entered into to plunder a neighbour's house, but as a treble crime? First the act, which is a crime of itself; secondly, the entering into a contract which it is a crime to observe, and yet a weakening of one of the main pillars of human confidence not to observe, and thus voluntarily placing ourselves under the necessity of choosing between two evils;—and thirdly, the crime of choosing the greater of the two evils, by the unlawful observance of an unlawful promise. But in my sense, the word contract is merely synonymous with the sense of duty acting in a specific direction, that is, determining our moral relations, as members of a body politic. If I have referred to a supposed origin of government, it has been in courtesy to a common notion: for I myself regard the supposition as no more than a means of simplifying to our apprehension the ever-continuing causes of social union, even as the conversation of the world may be represented as an act of continued creation. For, what if an original contract had really been entered into, and formally recorded? Still it could do no more than bind the contracting parties to act for the general good in the best manner, that the existing relations among themselves, (state of property, religion, and so forth) on the one hand, and the external circumstances on the other (ambitious or barbarous neighbours, and the like,) required or permitted. In after times it could be appealed to only for the general principle, and no more, than the ideal contract, could it affect a question of ways and means. As each particular age brings with it its own exigencies, so must it rely on its own prudence for the *specific measures by which they are to be encountered.*

Nevertheless, it assuredly cannot be denied, that an original,—more accurately, an ever-originating,—contract is a very natural and significant mode of expressing the reciprocal duties of subject and sovereign. We need only consider the utility of a real and formal state contract,—the Bill of Rights for instance,—as a sort of *est demonstratum* in politics; and the content lavished on this notion, though sufficiently compatible with the tenets of a Hume, will seem strange to us in the writings of a Protestant clergyman,* who surely owed some respect to a mode of thinking which God himself had authorised by his own example, in the establishment of the Jewish constitution. In this instance there was no necessity for deducing the will of God from the tendency of the laws to the general happiness: his will was expressly declared. Nevertheless, it seemed good to the divine wisdom, that there should be a covenant, an original contract, between himself as sovereign, and the Hebrew nation as subjects. This I admit was a written and formal contract; but the relations of mankind, as members of a body spiritual, or religious commonwealth, to the Saviour, as its head or regent;—is not this, too, styled a covenant, though it would be absurd to ask for the material instrument that contained it, or the time when it was signed or voted by the members of the church collectively.†

With this explanation, the assertion of an original or a perpetual contract is rescued from all rational objection; and however speciously it may be urged, that history can

* See Paley's Moral and Political Philosophy. B. vi. c. 3.—*Ed.*

† It is perhaps to be regretted, that the words, Old and New Testament,—they having lost the sense intended by the translators of the Bible—have not been changed into the Old and New Covenant. We cannot too carefully keep in sight a notion, which appeared to the Primitive Church the fittest and most scriptural mode of representing the sum of the contents of the sacred writings.

scarcely produce a single example of a state dating its primary establishment from a free and mutual covenant, the answer is ready: if there be any difference between a government and a band of robbers, an act of consent must be supposed on the part of the people governed.

ESSAY III.

Human institutions cannot be wholly constructed on principles of science, which is proper to immutable objects. In the government of the visible world the Supreme Wisdom itself submits to be the author of the better; not of the best, but of the best possible in the subsisting relations. Much more must all human legislators find a way to many evils rather than encourage the discontent that would lead to worse remedies. If it is not in the power of man to construct even the arch of a bridge that shall exactly correspond in its strength to the calculations of geometry, how much less can human science construct a constitution except by rendering itself flexible to experience and expediency: where so many things must fall out accidentally, and come not into any compliance with the preconceived ends: but men are forced to comply subsequently, and to strike in with things as they fall out, by after applications of them to their purposes, or by fining their purposes to them.

SOURU.

THE second system corresponds to the second point of view under which the human being may be considered, namely, as an animal gifted with understanding, or the faculty of suiting measures to circumstances. According to this theory, every institution of national origin needs no other justification than a proof, that under the particular circumstances it is expedient. Having in my former essays expressed myself,—so at least I am conscious I shall have appeared to do to many persons;—with comparative slight of the understanding considered as the sole guide of human conduct, and even with something like contempt and reprobation of the maxims of expedience, when represented as the only steady light of the conscience, and the absolute foundation of all morality; I shall perhaps seem guilty of an inconsistency, in

declaring myself an adherent of this second system, a zealous advocate for deriving the various forms and modes of government from human prudence, and of deeming that to be just which experience has proved to be expedient. From this charge of inconsistency* I shall best

* Distinct notions do not suppose different things. When I make a threefold distinction in human nature, I am fully aware, that it is a distinction, not a division, and that in every act of mind the man unites the properties of sense, understanding, and reason. Nevertheless it is of great practical importance, that these distinctions should be made and understood, the ignorance or perversion of them being alike injurious; as the first French constitution has most lamentably proved. It was the fashion in the profligate times of Charles II. to laugh at the Presbyterians, for distinguishing between the person and the king: while in fact they were ridiculing the most venerable maxims of English law,—the king never dies—the king can do no wrong,—and subverting the principles of genuine loyalty, in order to prepare the minds of the people for despotism.

Under the term "sense," I comprise whatever is passive in our being, without any reference to the question of materialism or immaterialism; all that man is in common with animals, in kind at least—his sensations, and impressions, whether of his outward senses, or the inner sense of imagination. This, in the language of the schools, was called the *vis receptiva*, or recipient property of the soul, from the original constitution of which we perceive and imagine all things under the forms of space and time. By the "understanding," I mean the faculty of thinking and forming judgments on the notices furnished by the sense, according to certain rules existing in itself, which rules constitute its distinct nature. By the pure "reason," I mean the power by which we become possessed of principles,—the eternal verities of Plato and Descartes, and of ideas, not images—as the ideas of a point, a line, a circle, in mathematics; * and of justice, holiness, free-will, and the like, in morals. Hence in works of pure science the definitions of necessity precede the reasoning, in other works they more aptly form the conclusion.

To many of my readers it will, I trust, be some recommendation of these distinctions, that they are more than once expressed, and every where supposed, in the writings of St. Paul. I have no hesitation in undertaking to prove, that every heresy which has disquieted the Christian Church, from Tritheism to Socinianism, has originated in and supported itself by, arguments rendered plausible only by the confusion of these faculties, and thus demanding for the objects of one,

* In the severity of logic, the geometrical point, line, surface, circle, and so forth, are theorems, not ideas.

exculpate myself by the full statement of the third system, and by the exposition of its grounds and consequences.

The third and last system, then, denies all rightful origin to government, except as far as it is derivable from principles contained in the reason of man, and judges all the relations of man in society by the laws of moral necessity, according to ideas.—I here use the word in its highest and primitive sense, and a nearly synonymous with the modern word ideal,—according to archetypal ideas co-essential with the reason, the consciousness of these ideas being indeed the sign and necessary product of the full development of the reason. The following then is the fundamental principle of this theory: Nothing is to be deemed rightful in civil society, or to be tolerated as such, but what is capable of being demonstrated out of the original laws of the pure reason. Of course, as there is but one system of geometry, so according to this theory there can be but one constitution and one system of legislation, and this consists in the freedom, which is the common right of all men, under the controul of that moral necessity, which is the common duty of all men. Whatever is not every where necessary, is no where right.

a sort of evidence appropriated to those of another faculty.—These disquisitions have the misfortune of being in ill-report, as dry and unsatisfactory; but I hope, in the course of the work, to gain them a better character—and if elucidations of their practical importance from the most momentous events of history, can render them interesting, to give them that interest at least. Besides, there is surely some good in the knowledge of truth, as truth—we were not made to live by bread alone—and in the strengthening of the intellect. It is an excellent remark of Scaliger's—*Harum indagatio subtilitatum, etsi non est utilis ad machinas furivarias conficiendas, exuit animum tamen incititae rubigine, acutitque ad alia.*—Exerc. 307. §§ 3. The investigation of these subtleties, though of no use to the construction of machines for grading corn, yet clears the mind from the rust of ignorance, and sharpens it for other things.

On this assumption the whole theory is built. To state it nakedly is to confute it satisfactorily. So at least it should seem. But in how winning and specious a manner this system may be represented even to minds of the loftiest order, if undisciplined and unhumbled by practical experience, has been proved by the general impassioned admiration and momentous effects of Rousseau's *Du Contrat Social*, and the writings of the French economists, or, as they more appropriately entitled themselves, physiocratic philosophers: and in how tempting and dangerous a manner it may be represented to the populace, has been made too evident in our country by the temporary effects of Paine's Rights of Man. Relatively, however, to this latter work it should be observed, that it is not a legitimate offspring of any one theory, but a confusion of the immorality of the first system with the misapplied universal principles of the last: and in this union, or rather lawless alternation, consists the essence of Jacobinism, as far as Jacobinism is anything but a term of abuse, or has any meaning of its own distinct from democracy and sedition.

A constitution equally suited to China and America, or to Russia and Great Britain, must surely be equally unfit for both, and deserve as little respect in political, as a quack's panacea in medical, practice. Yet there are three weighty motives for a distinct exposition of this theory,* and of the ground on which its pretensions are

* As metaphysics are the science which determines what can, and what can not, be known of being and the laws of being, *a priori*,—that is, from those necessities of the mind or forms of thinking, which, though first revealed to us by experience, must yet have pre-existed in order to make experience itself possible, even as the eye must exist previously to any particular act of seeing, though by sight only can we know that we have eyes—so might the philosophy of Rousseau and his followers not inaptly be entitled, *metapolitics*, and the doctors of this school *metapoliticians*.

bottomed: and I dare affirm, that for the same reasons there are few subjects which in the present state of the world have a fairer claim to the attention of every serious Englishman, who is likely, directly or indirectly, as partizan or as opponent, to interest himself in schemes of reform.

The first motive is derived from the propensity of mankind to mistake the abhorrence occasioned by the unhappy effects or accompaniments of a particular system for an insight into the falsehood of its principles. And it is the latter only, a clear insight, not any vehement emotion that can secure its permanent rejection. For by a wise ordinance of nature our feelings have no abiding-place in our memory; nay, the more vivid they are in the moment of their existence, the more dim and difficult to be remembered do they make the thoughts which accompanied them. Those of my readers, who at any time of their life have been in the habit of reading novels, may easily convince themselves of this truth, by comparing their recollections of those stories which most excited their curiosity, and even painfully affected their feelings, with their recollections of the calm and meditative pathos of Shakespeare and Milton. Hence it is that human experience, like the stern lights of a ship at sea, illumines only the path which we have passed over. The horrors of the Peasants' War in Germany, and the direful effects of the Anabaptist tenets, which were only nominally different from those of Jacobinism by the substitution of religious for philosophical jargon, struck all Europe for a time with affright. Yet little more than a century was sufficient to obliterate all effective memory of those events: the same principles budded forth anew, and produced the same fruits from the imprisonment of Charles I. to the *restoration of his son*. In the succeeding generations, to

the follies and vices of the European courts, and to the oppressive privileges of the nobility, were again transferred those feelings of disgust and hatred, which for a brief while the multitude had attached to the crimes and extravagances of political and religious fanaticism: and the same principles, aided by circumstances and dressed out in the ostentatious garb of a fashionable philosophy, once more rose triumphant, and effected the French revolution. That man has reflected little on human nature who does not perceive that the detestable maxims and correspondent crimes of the existing French despotism, have already dimmed the recollections of the democratic phrenzy in the minds of men; by little and little, have drawn off to other objects the electric force of the feelings, which had massed and upholden those recollections; and that a favourable concurrence of occasions is alone wanting to awaken the thunder and precipitate the lightning from the opposite quarter of the political heaven. The true origin of human events is so little susceptible of that kind of evidence which can compel our belief even against our will; and so many are the disturbing forces which modify the motion given by the first projection; and every age has, or imagines it has, its own circumstances which render past experience no longer applicable to the present case; that there will never be wanting answers and explanations, and specious flatteries of hope. I well remember, that when the examples of former Jacobins, Julius Caesar, Cromwell, &c., were adduced in France and England at the commencement of the French Consulate, it was ridiculed as pedantry and pedants' ignorance, to fear a repetition of such usurpation at the close of the enlightened eighteenth century. Those who possess the *Moniteurs* of that date will find set proofs, that such results were little less than impossible, and that it was an

insult to so philosophical an age, and so enlightened a nation, to dare direct the public eye towards them as lights of admonition and warning.

It is a common weakness with official statesmen, and with those who deem themselves honoured by their acquaintance, to attribute great national events to the influence of particular persons, to the errors of one man and to the intrigues of another, to any possible spark of a particular occasion, rather than to the true cause, the predominant state of public opinion. I have known men who, with most significant nods, and the civil contempt of pitying half smiles, have declared the natural explanation of the French revolution to be the mere fancies of garretteers, and then, with the solemnity of cabinet ministers, have proceeded to explain the whole by anecdotes. It is so stimulant to the pride of a vulgar mind, to be persuaded that it knows what few others know, and that it is the important depository of a sort of state secret, by communicating which it confers an obligation on others. But I have likewise met with men of intelligence, who at the commencement of the revolution were travelling on foot through the French provinces, and they bear witness, that in the remotest villages every tongue was employed in echoing and enforcing the doctrines of the Parisian journalists; that the public highways were crowded with enthusiasts, some shouting the watchwords of the revolution, others disputing on the most abstract principles of the universal constitution, which they fully believed, that all the nations of the earth were shortly to adopt; the most ignorant among them confident of his fitness for the highest duties of a legislator; and all prepared to shed their blood in the defence of the inalienable sovereignty of the self-governed people. The more abstract the notions were, with the closer affinity did they combine

with the most fervent feelings, and all the immediate impulses to action. The Lord Chancellor Bacon lived in an age of court intrigues, and was familiarly acquainted with all the secrets of personal influence. He, if any man, was qualified to take the gauge and measurement of their comparative power; and he has told us, that there is one, and but one infallible source of political prophecy, the knowledge of the predominant opinions and the speculative principles of men in general, between the age of twenty and thirty. Sir Philip Sidney,—the favourite of Queen Elizabeth, the paramount gentleman of Europe, the nephew, and—as far as a good man could be—the confidant of the intriguing and dark-minded Earl of Leicester,—was so deeply convinced that the principles diffused through the majority of a nation are the true oracles from whence statesmen are to learn wisdom, and that when the people speak loudly it is from their being strongly possessed either by the godhead or the daemon, that in the revolution of the Netherlands he considered the universal adoption of one set of principles, as a proof of the divine presence. ‘If Her Majesty,’ says he, ‘were the fountain, I would fear, considering what I daily find, that we should wax dry. But she is but a means which God useth.’ But if my readers wish to see the question of the efficacy of principles and popular opinions for evil and for good proved and illustrated with an eloquence worthy of the subject, I can refer them with the hardest anticipation of their thanks, to the late work concerning the relations of Great Britain, Spain, and Portugal, by my honoured friend, William Wordsworth, *quem quoties lego, non verba mihi videor audire, sed tonitrua.**

* I consider this reference to, and strong recommendation of, the work above mentioned, not as a voluntary tribute of admiration, but as an act of mere justice both to myself and to the readers of *The*

That erroneous political notions—they having become general and a part of the popular creed—have practical

Friend. My own heart bears me witness, that I am actuated by the deepest sense of the truth of the principles, which it has been and still more will be my endeavour to enforce, and of their paramount importance to the well-being of society at the present juncture : and that the duty of making the attempt, and the hope of not wholly failing in it, are, far more than the wish for the doubtful good of literary reputation, or any yet meaner object, my great and ruling motive. Mr. Wordsworth I deem a fellow-labourer in the same vineyard, actuated by the same motives and teaching the same principles, but with far greater powers of mind, and an eloquence more adequate to the importance and majesty of the cause. I am strengthened too by his knowledge, that I am not unauthorised by the sympathy of many good and good men, and men acknowledged as such by the public, in a admiration of his pamphlet.—*Neque enim debet operibus ejus obesse, quod vixit. An si inter eos, quos nunquam vidimus, florisset, non solum libros ejus, verum etiam imagines conquireremus, ejusdem nunc honor presentis, et gratia quasi satietate languescet ! At hoc primum, malignumque est, non admirari hominem admiratione dignissimum, quia videre, alloqui, audire, complecti, nec laudare tantum, verum etiam amare, contingit.*—PLIN. Epist. Lib. I. 16.

It is hardly possible for a man of ingenuous mind to act under the fear that he shall be suspected by honest men of the vileness of praising a work to the public, merely because he happens to be personally acquainted with the author. That this is so commonly done in reviews, furnishes only an additional proof of the morbid hardness produced in the moral sense by the habit of writing anonymous criticisms, especially under the further disguise of a pretended board or association of critics, each man expressing himself, to use the words of Andrew Marvel, as a synodical *individuum*. With regard, however, to the probability of being warped by partiality, I can only say that I judge of all works indifferently by certain fixed rules previously formed in my mind with all the power and vigilance of my judgment ; and that I should certainly of the two apply them with greater rigour to the production of a friend than to that of a person indifferent to me. But wherever I find in any work all the conditions of excellence in its kind, it is not the accident of the author's being my contemporary or even my friend, or the sneers of half-hearted men, that shall prevent me from speaking of it as in my inmost convictions I deem it deserves.

no, friend !

Though it be now the fashion to commend,
As men of strong minds, those alone who can
Censure with judgment, no such piece of man

consequences, and these, of course, of a most fearful nature, is a truth as certain as historic evidence can make it: and that when the feelings excited by these calamities have passed away, and the interest in them has been displaced by more recent events, the same errors are likely to be started afresh, pregnant with the same calamities, is an evil rooted in human nature in the present state of general information, for which we have hitherto found no adequate remedy. It may, perhaps in the scheme of Providence, be proper and conducive to its ends, that no adequate remedy should exist: for the folly of men is the wisdom of God. But if there be any means, if not of preventing, yet of palliating, the disease, and, in the more favoured nations, of checking its progress at the first symptoms; and if these means are to be at all compatible with the civil and intellectual freedom of mankind; they are to be found only in an intelligible and thorough exposure of the error, and, through that discovery, of the source, from which it derives its speciousness and powers of influence on the human mind. This therefore is my first motive for undertaking the disquisition.

The second is, that though the French code of revolutionary principles is now generally rejected as a system, yet every where in the speeches and writings of the English reformers, nay, not seldom in those of their opponents, I find certain maxims asserted or appealed to, which are not tenable, except as constituent parts of that system. Many of the most specious arguments in

Makes up my spirit: where desert does live,
There will I plant my wonder, and there give
My best endeavours to build up his glory
That truly merits!

Recommendatory Verses to one of the Old Plays.

proof of the imperfection and injustice of the present constitution of our legislature will be found, on closer examination, to pre-suppose the truth of certain principles, from which the adducers of these arguments loudly profess their dissent. But in political changes no permanence can be hoped for in the edifice, without consistency in the foundation.

The third motive is, that by detecting the true source of the influence of these principles, we shall at the same time discover their natural place and object; and that in themselves they are not only truths, but most important and sublime truths; and that their falsehood and their danger consists altogether in their misapplication. Thus the dignity of human nature will be secured, and at the same time a lesson of humility taught to each individual, when we are made to see that the universal necessary laws, and pure ideas of reason, were given us, not for the purpose of flattering our pride and enabling us to become national legislators; but that, by an energy of continued self-conquest, we might establish a free and yet absolute government in our own spirits.

ESSAY IV.

Albeit therefore, much of that we are to speak in this present cause, may seem to a number perhaps tedious, perhaps obscure, dark and intricate, (for many talk of the truth, which never sounded the depth from whence it springeth : and therefore, when they are led thereunto, they are soon weary, as men drawn from those beaten paths, wherewith they have been inured ;) yet this may not so far prevail, as to cut off that which the matter itself requireth, howsoever tho nice humour of some be therewith pleased or no. They unto whom we shall seem tedious, are in no wise injured by us, because it is in their own hands to spare that labour which they are not willing to endure. And if any complain of obscurity, they must consider, that in these matters it cometh no otherwise to pass, than in sundry the works both of art, and also of nature, where that which hath greatest force in the very things we see, is, notwithstanding, itself oftentimes not seen. The stateliness of houses, the goodliness of trees, when we behold them, delighteth the eye : but that foundation which beareth up the one, that root which ministereth unto the other nourishment and life, is in the bosom of the earth concealed ; and if there be at any time occasion to search into it, such labour is then more necessary than pleasant, both to them which undertake it and for the lookers-on. In like manner, the use and benefit of good laws, all that live under them, may enjoy with delight and comfort, albeit the grounds and first original causes from whence they have sprung, be unknown, as to the greatest part of men they are. But when they who withdraw their obedience, pretend that the laws which they should obey are corrupt and vicious ; for better examination of their quality, it behoveth the very foundation and root, the highest well-spring and fountain of them, to be discovered. Which, because we are not oftentimes accustomed to do, when we do it, the pains we take are more needful a great deal than acceptable, and the matters which we handle, seem by reason of newness, (till the mind grow better acquainted with them) dark, intricate, and unfamiliar. For as much help whereof, as may be in this case, I have endeavoured throughout the body of this whole discourse, that every former part might give strength unto all that follow, and every latter bring some light unto all before : so that if the judgements of men do but hold themselves in suspense, as touching these first more general meditations, till in order they have perused the rest that ensue ; what may

seem dark at the first, will afterwards be found more plain, even as the latter particular decisions will appear, I doubt not, more strong when the other have been read before.

HOOVER.*

ON THE GROUNDS OF GOVERNMENT AS LAID EXCLUSIVELY IN THE PURE REASON; OR A STATEMENT AND CRITIQUE OF THE THIRD SYSTEM OF POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY,—THE THEORY OF ROUSSEAU AND THE FRENCH ECONOMISTS.—

I PROCEED to my promise of developing from its embryo principles the tree of French liberty, of which the declaration of the rights of man, and the constitution of 1791 were the leaves, and the succeeding and present state of France the fruits. Let me not be blamed, if, in the interposed essays, introductory to this section, I have connected this system, though only in imagination, though only as a possible case, with a name so deservedly revered as that of Luther. It is some excuse, that to interweave with the reader's recollections a certain life and dramatic interest, during the perusal of the abstract† reasonings that are to follow, is the only means I possess of bribing his attention. We have, most of us, at some period or other of our lives, been amused with dialogues

* Recl. Pol. B. I. c. 1, 2.—*Ed.*

† I have been charged in the *Friend* with a novel and perplexing use of the word *abstract*, both as verb and noun. Novel it certainly is not; it being authorized by Lord Bacon, Des Cartes, and others. The fact is this: I take the word in its proper meaning, as *abstraho*, I draw from. The image, by which I represent to myself an oak tree, is no *fac simile* or adequate *icon* of the tree, but is abstracted from it by my eye. Now this appears to me a more natural as well as more grammatical and philosophical use of the word, than that elliptic construction, by which an accusative noun, and the preposition following it are to be understood, namely, I draw (*my attention from*) the, &c. Thus:—I give the outline of a flower on a slate with a slate pencil.—Now, I would say, I abstract the shape from the flower, or of the flower. But the objector would express the same thing by saying, I abstract the colour, &c. (that is, my attention from the colour, &c.)

Perhaps the latter might be better in familiar writing; but I continue to prefer the former on subjects that require precision. 1830.

of the dead. Who is there, that wishing to form a probable opinion on the grounds of hope and fear for an injured people warring against mighty armies, would not be pleased with a spirited fiction, which brought before him an old Numantian discoursing on that subject in Elysium, with a newly-arrived spirit from the streets of Saragoza or the walls of Gerona?

But I have a better reason. I wished to give every fair advantage to the opinions, which I deemed it of importance to confute. It is bad policy to represent a political system as having no charm but for robbers and assassins, and no natural origin but in the brains of fools or mad men, when experience has proved, that the great danger of the system consists in the peculiar fascination it is calculated to exert on noble and imaginative spirits; on all those, who, in the amiable intoxication of youthful benevolence, are apt to mistake their own best virtues and choicest powers for the average qualities and attributes of the human character. The very minds, which a good man would most wish to preserve or disentangle from the snare, are by these angry misrepresentations rather lured into it. Is it wonderful that a man should reject the arguments unheard, when his own heart proves the falsehood of the assumptions by which they are prefaced; or that he should retaliate on the aggressors their own evil thoughts? I am well aware, that the provocation was great, the temptation almost inevitable; yet still I cannot repel the conviction from my mind, that in part to this error, and in part to a certain inconsistency in his own fundamental principles, we are to attribute the small number of converts made by Burke during his life time. Let me not be misunderstood. I do not mean, that this great man supported different principles at different æras of his political life. On the

contrary, no man was ever more like himself. From his first published speech on the American colonies to his last posthumous tracts, we see the same man, the same doctrines, the same uniform wisdom of practical counsels, the same reasoning and the same prejudices against all abstract grounds, against all deduction of practice from theory. The inconsistency to which I allude, is of a different kind: it is the want of congruity in the principles appealed to in different parts of the same work; it is an apparent versatility of the principle with the occasion. If his opponents are theorists then every thing is to be founded on prudence, on moral calculations of expediency; and every man is represented as acting according to the state of his own immediate self-interest. Are his opponents calculators? Then calculation itself is represented as a sort of crime. God has given us feelings, and we are to obey them;—and the most absurd prejudices become venerable, to which these feelings have given consecration. I have not forgotten, that Burke himself defended these half contradictions, on the pretext of balancing the too much on the one side by a too much on the other. But never can I believe but that the straight line must needs be the nearest; and that where there is the most, and the most unalloyed truth, there will be the greatest and most permanent power of persuasion. But the fact was, that Burke in his public character found himself, as it were, in a Noah's ark, with a very few men and a great many beasts. He felt how much his immediate power was lessened by the very circumstance of his measureless superiority to those about him: he acted, therefore, under a perpetual system of compromise—a compromise of greatness with meanness; a compromise of comprehension with narrowness; a compromise of the philosopher,—

who, armed with the twofold knowledge of history and the laws of spirit, looked, as with a telescope, far around and into the remote distance,—with the mere men of business, or with yet coarser intellects, who handled a truth, which they were required to receive, as they would handle an ox, which they were desired to purchase. But why need I repeat what has been already said in so happy a manner by Goldsmith of this great man :—

*Who too deep for his hearers, still went on refining,
And thought of convincing, while they thought of dining.**

And if in consequence it was his fate to “cut blocks with a razor,” I may be permitted to add, that in respect of truth, though not of genius, the weapon was injured by the misapplication.

For myself, however, I act and will continue to act under the belief, that the whole truth is the best antidote to falsehoods which are dangerous chiefly because they are half-truths: and that an erroneous system is best confuted, not by an abuse of theory in general, nor by an absurd opposition of theory to practice, but by a detection of the errors in the particular theory. For the meanest of men has his theory, and to think at all is to theorize. With these convictions I proceed immediately to the system of the economists and to the principles on which it is constructed, and from which it must derive all its strength.

The system commences with an undeniable truth, and an important deduction therefrom equally undeniable. All voluntary actions, say they, having for their objects good or evil, are moral actions. But all morality is grounded in the reason. Every man is born with the

* Retaliation.—Ed.

faculty of reason : and whatever is without it, be the shape what it may, is not a man or person, but a thing. Hence the sacred principle, recognized by all laws, human and divine, the principle indeed, which is the ground-work of all law and justice, that a person can never become a thing, nor be treated as such without wrong. But the distinction between person and thing consists herein, that the latter may rightfully be used, altogether and merely, as a mean ; but the former must always be included in the end, and form a part of the final cause. We plant the tree and we cut it down, we breed the sheep and we kill it, wholly as means to our own ends. The woodcutter and the hind are likewise employed as means, but on an agreement of reciprocal advantage, which includes them as well as their employer in the end. Again : as the faculty of reason implies free-agency, morality,—that is, the dictate of reason,—gives to every rational being the right of acting as a free agent, and of finally determining his conduct by his own will, according to his own conscience : and this right is inalienable except by guilt, which is an act of self-forfeiture, and the consequences therefore to be considered as the criminal's own moral election. In respect of their reason * all men are equal. The measure of the understanding and of all other faculties of man, is different in different persons : but reason is not susceptible of degree. For since it merely decides whether any given thought or action is or is not in contradiction with the rest, there can be no reason better, or more reason, than another.

Reason ! best and holiest gift of God and bond of

* This position has been already explained, and the sophistry grounded on it detected and exposed, in the last essay of the *Lauding-Place*, in this volume.

union with the giver ;—the high title by which the majesty of man claims precedence above all other living creatures ;—mysterious faculty, the mother of conscience, of language, of tears, and of smiles ;—calm and incorruptible legislator of the soul, without whom all its other powers would “meet in mere oppugnancy ;”—sole principle of permanence amid endless change,—in a world of discordant appetites and imagined self-interests the one only common measure, which taken away,—

Force should be right ; or, rather right and wrong,—
Between whose endless jar justice resides,—
Should lose their names, and so should justice too.
Then every thing includes itself in power,
Power into will, will into appetite ;
And appetite a universal wolf,
So doubly seconded with will and power,
Must make perforce a universal prey !

Thrice blessed faculty of reason ! all other gifts, though goodly and of celestial origin, health, strength, talents, all the powers and all the means of enjoyment, seem dispensed by chance or sullen caprice ;—thou alone, more than even the sunshine, more than the common air, art given to all men, and to every man alike. To thee, who being one art the same in all, we owe the privilege, that of all we can become one, a living whole,—that we have a country. Who then shall dare prescribe a law of moral action for any rational being, which does not flow immediately from that reason, which is the fountain of all morality ? Or how without breach of conscience can we limit or coerce the powers of a free agent, except by coincidence with that law in his own mind, which is at once the cause, the condition, and the measure of his free agency ? Man must be free ; or to what purpose was he made a spirit of reason, and not a machine of

instinct? Man must obey; or wherefore has he a conscience? The powers, which create this difficulty, contain its solution likewise: for their service is perfect freedom. And whatever law or system of law compels any other service, disennobles our nature, leagues itself with the animal against the godlike, kills in us the very principle of joyous well-doing, and fights against humanity.

By the application of these principles to the social state there arises the following system, which, as far as its first grounds are concerned, is developed the most fully by J. J. Rousseau in his work *Du Contrat Social*. If then no individual possesses the right of prescribing any thing to another individual, the rule of which is not contained in their common reason, society, which is but an aggregate of individuals, can communicate this right to no one. It cannot possibly make that rightful which the higher and inviolable law of human nature declares contradictory and unjust. But concerning right and wrong, the reason of each and every man is the competent judge: for how else could he be an amenable being, or the proper subject of any law? This reason, therefore, in any one man, cannot even in the social state be rightfully subjugated to the reason of any other. Neither an individual, nor yet the whole multitude which constitutes the state, can possess the right of compelling him to do any thing, of which it cannot be demonstrated that his own reason must join in prescribing it. If therefore society is to be under a rightful constitution of government, and one that can impose on rational beings a true and moral obligation to obey it, it must be framed on such principles that every individual follows his own reason while he obeys the laws of the constitution, and performs the will of the state while he follows the dic-

tates of his own reason. This is expressly asserted by Rousseau, who states the problem of a perfect constitution of government in the following words: *trouver une forme d'association—par laquelle chacun s'unissant à tous, n'obéisse pourtant qu'à lui même, et reste aussi libre qu'auparavant*,—that is, to find a form of society according to which each one uniting himself with the whole shall yet obey himself only and remain as free as before. This right of the individual to retain his whole natural independence, even in the social state, is absolutely inalienable. He cannot possibly concede or compromise it: for this very right is one of his most sacred duties. He would sin against himself, and commit high treason against the reason which the Almighty Creator has given him, if he dared abandon its exclusive right to govern his actions.

Laws obligatory on the conscience, can only therefore proceed from that reason which remains always one and the same, whether it speaks through this or that person: like the voice of an external ventriloquist, it is indifferent from whose lips it appears to come, if only it be audible. The individuals indeed are subject to errors and passions, and each man has his own defects. But when men are assembled in person or by real representatives, the actions and re-actions of individual self-love balance each other; errors are neutralized by opposite errors; and the winds rushing from all quarters at once with equal force, produce for the time a deep calm, during which the general will arising from the general reason displays itself. 'It is fittest,' says Burke himself,* 'that sovereign authority should be exercised where it is most likely to be attended with the most effectual correctives. These correctives

* Note on his motion relative to the Speech from the Throne, Vol. ii. p. 647, 4to Edit.

are furnished by the nature and course of parliamentary proceedings, and by the infinitely diversified characters which compose the two Houses. The fulness, the freedom, and publicity of discussion, leave it easy to distinguish what are acts of power, and what the determinations of equity and reason. There prejudice corrects prejudice, and the different asperities of party zeal mitigate and neutralize each other.

This, however, as my readers will have already detected, is no longer a demonstrable deduction from reason. It is a mere probability, against which other probabilities may be weighed: as the lust of authority the contagious nature of enthusiasm, and other of the acute or chronic diseases of deliberative assemblies. But which of these results is the more probable, the correction or the contagion of evil, must depend on circumstances and grounds of expediency: and thus we already find ourselves beyond the magic circle of the pure reason, and within the sphere of the understanding and the prudence. Of this important fact Rousseau was by no means unaware in his theory, though with gross inconsistency he takes no notice of it in his application of the theory to practice. He admits the possibility, he is compelled by history to allow even the probability, that the most numerous popular assemblies, nay even whole nations, may at times be hurried away by the same passions, and under the dominion of a common error. This will of all is then of no more value, than the humours of any one individual: and must therefore be sacredly distinguished from the pure will which flows from universal reason. To this point then I entreat the reader's particular attention: for in this distinction, established by Rousseau himself, between the *volonté de tous* and the *volonté générale*,—that is, between the collective will, and a casual overbalance

of wills—the falsehood or nothingness of the whole system becomes manifest. For hence it follows, as an inevitable consequence, that all which is said in the *Contrat Social* of that sovereign will, to which the right of universal legislation appertains, applies to no one human being, to no society or assemblage of human beings, and least of all to the mixed multitude that makes up the people: but entirely and exclusively to reason itself, which, it is true, dwells in every man potentially, but actually and in perfect purity is found in no man and in no body of men. This distinction the later disciples of Rousseau chose completely to forget, and,—a far more melancholy case—the constituent legislators of France forgot it likewise. With a wretched parrotry they wrote and harangued without ceasing of the *volonté générale*—the inalienable sovereignty of the people: and by these high-sounding phrases led on the vain, ignorant, and intoxicated populace to wild excesses and wilder expectations, which entailing on them the bitterness of disappointment cleared the way for military despotism, for the Satanic government of horror under the Jacobins, and of terror under the Corsican.

Luther lived long enough to see the consequences of the doctrines into which indignant pity and abstract principles of right had hurried him—to see, to retract and to oppose them. If the same had been the lot of Rousseau, I doubt not, that his conduct would have been the same. In his whole system there is beyond controversy much that is true and well reasoned, if only its application be not extended farther than the nature of the case permits. But then we shall find that little or nothing is won by it for the institutions of society; and least of all for the constitution of governments, the theory of which it was his wish to ground on it. Apply

his principles to any case, in which the sacred and inviolable laws of morality are immediately interested, all becomes just and pertinent. No power on earth can oblige me to act against my conscience. No magistrate, no monarch, no legislature, can without tyranny compel me to do anything which the acknowledged laws of God have forbidden me to do. So act that thou mayest be able, without involving any contradiction, to will that the maxim of thy conduct should be the law of all intelligent beings—is the one universal and sufficient principle and guide of morality. And why? Because the object of morality is not the outward act, but the internal maxim of our actions. And so far it is infallible. But with what show of reason can we pretend, from a principle by which we are to determine the purity of our motives, to deduce the form and matter of a rightful government, the main office of which is to regulate the outward actions of particular bodies of men, according to their particular circumstances? Can we hope better of constitutions framed by ourselves, than of that which was given by Almighty Wisdom itself? The laws of the Hebrew commonwealth, which flowed from the pure reason, remain and are immutable; but the regulations dictated by prudence, though by the divine prudence, and though given in thunder from the mount, have passed away; and while they lasted, were binding only for that one state, the particular circumstances of which rendered them expedient.

Rousseau indeed asserts, that there is an inalienable sovereignty inherent in every human being possessed of reason: and from this the framers of the constitution of 1791 deduce, that the people itself is its own sole rightful legislator, and at most dare only recede so far from its right as to delegate to chosen deputies the power of representing and declaring the general will. But this is

wholly without proof; for it has already been fully shewn, that according to the principle out of which this consequence is attempted to be drawn, it is not the actual man, but the abstract reason alone, that is the sovereign and rightful lawgiver. The confusion of two things so different is so gross an error, that the Constituent Assembly could scarcely proceed a step in their declaration of rights, without some glaring inconsistency. Children are excluded from all political power;—are they not human beings in whom the faculty of reason resides? Yes! but in them the faculty is not yet adequately developed. But are not gross ignorance, inveterate superstition, and the habitual tyranny of passion and sensuality, equally preventives of the development, equally impediments to the rightful exercise, of the reason, as childhood and early youth? Who would not rely on the judgment of a well educated English lad, bred in a virtuous and enlightened family, in preference to that of a brutal Russian, who believes that he can scourge his wooden idol into good humour, or attributes to himself the merit of perpetual prayer, when he has fastened the petitions, which his priest has written for him, on the wings of a windmill?—Again: women are likewise excluded—a full half, and that assuredly the most innocent, the most amiable half, of the whole human race, is excluded, and this too by a constitution which boasts to have no other foundations but those of universal reason! Is reason then an affair of sex? No! But women are commonly in a state of dependence, and are not likely to exercise their reason with freedom. Well! and does not this ground of exclusion apply with equal or greater force to the poor, to the infirm, to men in embarrassed circumstances, to all in short whose maintenance, be it scanty or be it ample, depends on the will

of others? How far are we to go? Where must we stop? What classes should we admit? Whom must we disfranchise? The objects concerning whom we are to determine these questions, are all human beings and differenced from each other by degrees only, these degrees, too, oftentimes changing. Yet the principle on which the whole system rests is, that reason is not susceptible of degree. Nothing, therefore, which subsists wholly in degrees, the changes of which do not obey any necessary law, can be subjects of pure science, or determinable by mere reason. For these things we must rely on our understandings, enlightened by past experience and immediate observation, and determining our choice by comparisons of expediency.

It is therefore altogether a mistaken notion, that the theory which would deduce the social rights of man, and the sole rightful form of government from principles of reason, involves a necessary preference of the democratic, or even the representative, constitutions. Accordingly, several of the French economists, although devotees of Rousseau and the physiocratic system, and assuredly not the least respectable of their party either in morals or in intellect,—and these too men who lived and wrote under the unlimited monarchy of France, and who were therefore well acquainted with the evils connected with that system,—did yet declare themselves for a pure monarchy in preference to the aristocratic, the popular, or the mixed form. These men argued, that no other laws being allowable but those which are demonstrably just, and founded in the simplest ideas of reason, and of which every man's reason is the competent judge, it is indifferent whether one man, or one or more assemblies of men, give form and publicity to them. For being matters of pure and simple science, they require no

experience in order to see their truth, and among an enlightened people, by whom this system had been once solemnly adopted, no sovereign would dare to make other laws than those of reason. They further contend, that if the people were not enlightened, a purely popular government could not co-exist with this system of absolute justice: and if it were adequately enlightened, the influence of public opinion would supply the place of formal representation, while the form of the government would be in harmony with the unity and simplicity of its principles. This they entitle *le despotisme légal sous l'empire de l'évidence*. The best statement of the theory thus modified may be found in *Mercier de la Rivière, L'ordre Naturel et Essentiel des Sociétés Politiques*. From the proofs adduced in the preceding paragraph, to which many others might be added, I have no hesitation in affirming that this latter party are the more consistent reasoners.

It is worthy of remark, that the influence of these writings contributed greatly, not indeed to raise the present emperor, but certainly to reconcile a numerous class of politicians to his unlimited authority: and as far as his lawless passion for war and conquest allows him to govern according to any principles, he favours those of the physiocratic philosophers. His early education must have given him a predilection for a theory conducted throughout with mathematical precision; its very simplicity promised the readiest and most commodious machine for despotism, for it moulds a nation into as calculable a power as an army; while the stern and seeming greatness of the whole and its mock elevation above human feelings, flattered his pride, hardened his conscience, and aided the efforts of self-delusion. Reason is the sole sovereign, the only rightful legislator: but

reason, to act on man, must be impersonated. The Providence which had so marvellously raised and supported him, had marked him out for the representative of reason, and had armed him with irresistible force, in order to realize its laws. In him therefore might become right, and his cause and that of destiny, (or as he now chooses to word it, exchanging blind nonsense for staring blasphemy), his cause and the cause of God are one and the same. Excellent postulate for a choleric and self-willed tyrant! What avails the impoverishment of a few thousand merchants and manufacturers? What even the general wretchedness of millions of perishable men, for a short generation? Should these stand in the way of the chosen conquerer, the *innovator mundi, et stupor sæculorum*, or prevent a constitution of things, which, erected on intellectual and perfect foundations, groweth not old, but like the eternal justice, of which it is the living image,

————— may despise
The strokes of fate and see the world's last hour!

For justice, austere, unrelenting justice, is every where holden up as the one thing needful: and the only duty of the citizen, in fulfilling which he obeys all the laws, is not to encroach on another's sphere of action. The greatest possible happiness of a people is not, according to this system, the object of a governor; but to preserve the freedom of all, by coercing within the requisite bounds the freedom of each. Whatever a government does more than this, comes of evil: and its best employment is the repeal of laws and regulations, not the establishment of them. Each man is the best judge of his own happiness, and to himself must it therefore be entrusted. Remove all the interferences of positive

statutes, all monopoly, all bounties, all prohibitions, and all encouragements of importation and exportation, of particular growth and particular manufactures: let the revenues of the state be taken at once from the produce of the soil; and all things will then find their level, all irregularities will correct each other, and an indestructible cycle of harmonious motions take place in the moral equally as in the natural world. The business of the governor is to watch incessantly, that the state shall remain composed of individuals, acting as individuals, by which alone the freedom of all can be secured. Its duty is to take care that itself remain the sole collective power, and that all the citizens should enjoy the same rights, and without distinction be subject to the same duties.

Splendid promises! Can any thing appear more equitable than the last proposition, the equality of rights and duties? Can any thing be conceived more simple in the idea? But the execution—! Let the four or five quarto volumes of the Conscrip Code be the comment! But as briefly as possible I shall prove, that this system, as an exclusive total, is under any form impracticable; and that if it were realized, and as far as it were realized, it would necessarily lead to general barbarism and the most grinding oppression; and that the final result of a general attempt to introduce it, must be a military despotism inconsistent with the peace and safety of mankind. That reason should be our guide and governor is an undeniable truth, and all our notion of right and wrong is built thereon: for reason is one of the two fountain-heads in which the whole moral nature of man originated and subsists. From reason alone can we derive the principles which our understandings are to apply, the ideal to which by means of our understandings

we should endeavour to approximate. This however gives no proof that reason alone ought to govern and direct human beings, either as individuals or as states. It ought not to do this, because it cannot. The laws of reason are unable to satisfy the first conditions of human society. We will admit that the shortest code of law is the best, and that the citizen finds himself most at ease where the government least intermeddles with his affairs, and confines its efforts to the preservation of public tranquillity; we will suffer this to pass at present undisputed, though the examples of England, and before the late events, of Holland and Switzerland,—surely the three happiest nations of the world—to which perhaps we might add the major part of the former German free towns, furnish stubborn facts in presumption of the contrary,—yet still the proof is wanting that the first and most general applications and exertions of the power of man can be definitely regulated by reason unaided by the positive and conventional laws in the formation of which the understanding must be our guide, and which become just because they happen to be expedient.

The chief object for which men first formed themselves into a state was not the protection of their lives, but of their property. Where the nature of the soil and climate precludes all property but personal, and permits that only in its simplest forms, as in Greenland, men remain in the domestic state and form neighbourhoods, but not governments. And in North America the chiefs appear to exercise government in those tribes only which possess individual landed property. Among the rest the chief is their general; but government is exercised only in families by the fathers of families. But where individual landed property exists, there must be inequality of property: the nature of the earth and the nature of the

mind unite to make the contrary impossible. But to suppose the land the property of the state, and the labour and the produce to be equally divided among all the members of the state, involves more than one contradiction; for it could not subsist without gross injustice, except where the reason of all and of each was absolute master of the selfish passions of sloth, envy, and the like; and yet the same state would preclude the greater part of the means by which the reason of man is developed. In whatever state of society you would place it, from the most savage to the most refined, it would be found equally unjust and impossible; and were there a race of men, a country, and a climate, that permitted such an order of things, the same causes would render all government superfluous. To property, therefore, and to its inequalities all human laws directly or indirectly relate, which would not be equally laws in the state of nature. Now it is impossible to deduce the right of property* from pure reason. The utmost which reason could give would be a property in the forms of things, as far as the forms were produced by individual power. In the matter it could give no property. We regard angels and glorified spirits as beings of pure reason: and whoever thought of property in heaven? Even the simplest and most moral form of it, namely, marriage, (we know from the highest authority) is excluded from the state of pure reason. Rousseau himself expressly admits that property cannot be deduced from the laws of reason and nature; and he ought therefore to have admitted at the same time that his whole theory was a

* I mean, practically and with the inequalities inseparable from the actual existence of property. Abstractedly, the right to property is deducible from the free-agency of man. If to act freely be a right, sphere of action must be so too.

thing of air. In the most respectable point of view he could regard his system as analogous to geometry. If indeed it be purely scientific, how could it be otherwise? Geometry holds forth an ideal which can never be fully realized in nature, even because it is nature: because bodies are more than extension, and to pure extension of space only the mathematical theorems wholly correspond. In the same manner the moral laws of the intellectual world, as far as they are deducible from pure intellect, are never perfectly applicable to our mixed and sensitive nature, because man is something besides reason; because his reason never acts by itself, but must clothe itself in the substance of individual understanding and specific inclination, in order to become a reality and an object of consciousness and experience. It will be seen hereafter that together with this, the key-stone of the arch, the greater part and the most specious of the popular arguments in favour of universal suffrage fail in and are crushed. I will mention one only at present. Major Cartwright,—in his deduction of the rights of the subject from principles “not susceptible of proof, being self-evident, if one of which be violated all are shaken,”—affirms (Principle 9th; though the greater part indeed are moral aphorisms, or blank assertions, not scientific principles) “that a power which ought never to be used ought never to exist.” Again he affirms that “laws to bind all must be assented to by all, and consequently every man, even the poorest, has an equal right to suffrage;” and this for an additional reason, because “all without exception are capable of feeling happiness or misery accordingly as they are well or ill governed.” But are they not then capable of feeling happiness or misery accordingly as they do or do not possess the means of a comfortable subsistence? and who is the

judge, what is a comfortable subsistence, but the man himself? Might not then, on the same or equivalent principles, a leveller construct a right to equal property? The inhabitants of this country without property form, doubtless, a great majority; each of these has a right to a suffrage, and the richest man to no more; and the object of this suffrage is, that each individual may secure himself a true efficient representative of his will. Here then is a legal power of abolishing or equalizing property: and according to Major C. himself, a power which ought never to be used ought not to exist.

Therefore, unless he carries his system to the whole length of common labour and common possession, a right to universal suffrage cannot exist; but if not to universal suffrage, there can exist no natural right to suffrage at all. In whatever way he would obviate this objection, he must admit expedience founded on experience and particular circumstances, which will vary in every different nation, and in the same nation at different times, as the maxim of all legislation and the ground of all legislative power. For his universal principles, as far as they are principles and universal, necessarily suppose uniform and perfect subjects, which are to be found in the ideas of pure geometry and, I trust, in the realities of heaven, but never, never, in creatures of flesh and blood.

ESSAY V.

IS THE FLOOD OF PARTY SPIRIT : OR ANYTHING MORE.

It is not so wonderful if some good and innocent men, especially men so zealous, who were generally more concerned about what was done a few hundred centuries ago, than what was transacted in the present time in the present century—it is no wonder if some such were for a while borne away to the approval of opinions which they, after more serious reflection, disavowed. Yet his immunity from any self-interest or selfishness, together with his learning, secured him from the extravagances of imagination, the people's opinion.—*Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding*.

I HAVE NEVER seen Major Cartwright, much less enjoy the benefit of his acquaintance: but I know enough of his character, from the testimony of others and from his own writings, to respect his talents, and revere the purity of his motives. I am fully persuaded that there are few better men, few more fervent or disinterested adherents of their country or the laws of their country, of whatever things are lovely, of whatever things are honourable. It would give me great pain should I be supposed to have introduced, disrespectfully, a name, which from my early youth I never heard mentioned without a feeling of affectionate admiration. I have indeed quoted from this venerable patriot, as from the most respectable English advocate for the theory, which derives the rights of government, and the duties of obedience to it, exclusively from principles of pure reason. It was of consequence to my cause that I should not be thought to

have been waging war against a straw image of my own setting up, or even against a foreign idol that had neither worshippers nor advocates in our own country; and it was not less my object to keep my discussion aloof from those passions, which more unpopular names might have excited. I therefore introduced the name of Cartwright, as I had previously done that of Luther, in order to give every fair advantage to a theory, which I thought it of importance to confute; and as an instance that though the system might be made tempting to the vulgar, yet that, taken unmixed and entire, it was chiefly fascinating for lofty and imaginative spirits, who mistook their own virtues and powers for the average character of men in general.

Neither by fair statements nor by fair reasoning should I ever give offence to Major Cartwright himself, nor to his judicious friends. If I am in danger of offending them, it must arise from one or other of two causes; either that I have falsely represented his principles, or his motives and the tendency of his writings. In the book from which I quoted, "The People's Barrier against undue Influence," (the only one of Major Cartwright's which I possess) I am conscious that there are six foundations stated of constitutional government. Therefore, it may be urged, the author cannot be justly classed with those who deduce our social rights and correlative duties exclusively from principles of pure reason, or unavoidable conclusions from such. My answer is ready. Of these six foundations three are but different words for one and the same, namely, the law of reason, the law of God, and first principles: and the three that remain cannot be taken as different, inasmuch as they are afterwards affirmed to be of no validity except as far as they are evidently deduced from the former.

that is, from the principles implanted by God in the universal reason of man. These three latter foundations are, the general customs of the realm, particular customs, and acts of Parliament. It might be supposed that the author had not used his terms in the precise and single sense in which they are defined in my former essay; and that self-evident principles may be meant to include the dictates of manifest expedience, the inductions of the understanding, as well as the prescripts of the pure reason. But no; Major Cartwright has guarded against the possibility of this interpretation, and has expressed himself as decisively, and with as much warmth, against founding governments on grounds of expedience, as I have done against founding morality on the same. Euclid himself could not have defined his words more sternly within the limits of pure science; for instance, see the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th primary rules:—‘A principle is a manifest and simple proposition comprehending a certain truth. Principles are the proof of every thing: but are not susceptible of external proof, being self-evident. If one principle be violated, all are shaken. Against him, who denies principles, all dispute is useless, and reason unintelligible, or disallowed, so far as he denies them. The laws of nature are immutable.’—Neither could Rousseau himself, nor his predecessors, the Fifth-monarchy men, have more nakedly or emphatically identified the foundations of government in the concrete with those of religion and morality in the abstract: see Major Cartwright’s primary rules from 31 to 39, and from 44 to 83. In these it is affirmed;—that the legislative rights of every citizen are inherent in his nature; that, being natural rights, they must be equal in all men; that a natural right is that right which a citizen claims as being a man, and that it hath no other

foundation but his personality or reason: that property can neither increase nor modify any legislative right; that every one man shall have one vote however poor, and for any one man, however rich, to have more than one vote, is against natural justice, and an evil measure; that it is better for a nation to endure all adversities, than to assent to one evil measure; that to be free is to be governed by laws, to which we have ourselves assented, either in person, or by representatives for whose election we have actually voted: that all not having a right of suffrage are slaves, and that a vast majority of the people of Great Britain are slaves! To prove the total coincidence of Major Cartwright's theory with that which I have stated, and I trust confuted, in the preceding essay, it only remains for me to prove, that the former, equally with the latter, confounds the sufficiency of the conscience to make every person a moral and amenable being, with the sufficiency of judgment and experience requisite to the exercise of political right. A single quotation will place this out of all doubt, which from its length I shall insert in a note.*

* "But the equality," (observe, that Major Cartwright is here speaking of the natural right to universal suffrage, and consequently of the universal right of eligibility, as well as of election, independently of character or property)—"the equality and dignity of human nature in all men, whether rich or poor, is placed in the highest point of view by St. Paul, when he reprehends the Corinthian believers for their litigations one with another, in the courts of law where unbelievers presided; and as an argument of the competency of all men to judge for themselves, he alludes to that elevation in the kingdom of heaven which is promised to every man who shall be virtuous, or in the language of that time, a saint. *Do ye not know, says he, that the saints shall judge the world? And if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that ye shall judge the angels? How much more things that pertain to this life?* If after such authorities, such manifestations of truth as these, any Christian through those prejudices, which are the effects of long habits

Great stress, indeed, is laid on the authority of our ancient laws, both in this and the other works of our patriotic author; and whatever his system may be, it is impossible not to feel, that the author himself possesses the heart of a genuine Englishman. But still his system can neither be changed nor modified by these appeals: for among the primary maxims, which form the ground-work of it, we are informed not only that law in the abstract is the perfection of reason; but that the law of God and the law of the land are all one! What! The statutes against witches; or those against papists, the abolition of which gave rise to the infamous riots in 1780! Or, in the author's own opinion, the statutes of disfranchisement and for making Parliaments septennial!—Nay! but (Principle 28) an unjust law is no law: and (P. 22.) against the law of reason neither prescription, statute, nor custom, may prevail; and if any such be brought against it, they be not prescriptions, statutes, nor customs, but things void: and (P. 29.) what the

of injustice and oppression, and teach us to *despise the poor*, shall still think it right to exclude that part of the commonalty, consisting of tradesmen, artificers, and labourers, or any of them from voting in elections of members to serve in Parliament, I must sincerely lament such a persuasion as a misfortune both to himself and his country. And if any man,—not having given himself the trouble to consider whether or not the Scripture be an authority, but who, nevertheless, is a friend to the rights of mankind—upon grounds of mere prudence, policy, or expediency, shall think it advisable to go against the whole current of our constitutional and law maxims, by which it is self-evident that every man, as being a man, is created free, born to freedom, and, without it, a thing, a slave, a beast; and shall contend for drawing a line of exclusion at freeholders of forty pounds a year, or forty shillings a year, or householders, or pot-boilers, so that all who are below that line shall not have a vote in the election of a legislative guardian,—which is taking from a citizen the power even of self-preservation,—such a man, I venture to say, is bolder than he who wrestled with the angel; for he wrestles with God himself, who established those principles in the eternal laws of nature, never to be violated by any of his creatures.”—Pp. 23, 24.

Parliament doth shall be holden for nought, whensoever it shall enact that which is contrary to a natural right! I dare not suspect a grave writer of such egregious trifling, as to mean no more by these assertions, than that what is wrong is not right; and if more than this be meant, it must be that the subject is not bound to obey any act of Parliament, which according to his conviction entrenches on a principle of natural right; which natural rights are, as we have seen, not confined to the man in his individual capacity, but are made to confer universal legislative privileges on every subject of every state, and of the extent of which every man is competent to judge, who is competent to be the object of law at all, that is, every man who has not lost his reason.

In the statement of his principles, therefore, I have not misrepresented Major Cartwright. Have I then endeavoured to connect public odium with his name, by arraigning his motives, or the tendency of his writings? The tendency of his writings in my inmost conscience I believe to be perfectly harmless, and I dare cite them in confirmation of the opinions which it was the object of my introductory essays to establish, and as an additional proof, that no good man communicating what he believes to be the truth for the sake of truth, and according to the rules of conscience, will be found to have acted injuriously to the peace or interests of society. The venerable ~~state-moralist~~,—for this is his true character, and in this title is conveyed the whole error of his system,—is incapable of aiding his arguments by the poignant condiment of personal slander, incapable of appealing to the envy of the multitude by bitter declamation against the follies and oppressions of the higher classes. He would shrink with horror from the thought

of adding a false and unnatural influence to the cause of truth and justice, by details of present calamity or immediate suffering, fitted to excite the fury of the multitude, or by promises of turning the current of the public revenue into the channels* of individual distress and poverty, so as to bribe the populace by selfish hopes. It does not belong to men of his character to delude the uninstructed into the belief that their shortest way of obtaining the good things of this life, is to commence busy politicians, instead of remaining industrious labourers. He knows, and acts on the knowledge, that it is the duty of the enlightened philanthropist to plead for the poor and ignorant, not to them.

No.—From works written and published under the control of austere principles, and at the impulse of a lofty and generous enthusiasm,—from works rendered attractive only by the fervour of sincerity, and imposing only by the majesty of plain dealing, no danger will be apprehended by a wise man, no offence received by a good man. I could almost venture to warrant our patriot's publications innoxious, from the single circumstance of their perfect freedom from personal themes in this age of personality, this age of literary and political gossiping, when the meanest insects are worshipped with a sort of Egyptian superstition, if only the brainless head be atoned for by the sting of personal malignity in the tail; when the most vapid satires have become the objects of a keen public interest purely from the number of con-

* I must remind the reader, that this essay was written in October 1809. If Major Cartwright has ever since then acted in a different spirit, and tampered personally with the distresses, and consequent irritability of the ignorant, the inconsistency is his, not mine. If what I then believed and avowed should now appear a severe satire in the shape of a false prophecy, any shame I might feel for my lack of penetration would be lost in the sincerity of my regret.—1818.

temporary characters named in the patch-work notes,—which possess, however, the comparative merit of being more poetical than the text,—and because, to increase the stimulus, the author has sagaciously left his own name for whispers and conjectures!—In an age, when even sermons are published with a double appendix stuffed with names—in a generation so transformed from the characteristic reserve of Britons, that, from the ephemeral sheet of a London newspaper to the everlasting Scotch professional quarto, almost every publication exhibits or flatters the epidemic distemper; that the very last year's rebuses in the *Lady's Diary*, are answered in a serious elegy 'On my father's death,' with the name and *habitat* of the elegiac *Œdipus* subscribed;—and other ingenious solutions are likewise given to the said rebuses—not, as heretofore, by Crito, Philander, A B, X Y, &c. but by fifty or sixty plain English surnames at full length, with their several places of abode! In an age, when a bashful *Philalethes* or *Phileleutheros* is as rare on the title-pages and among the signatures of our magazines, as a real name used to be in the days of our shy and notice-shunning grandfathers! When—more exquisite than all—I see an epic poem—spirits of Maro and Mæonides, make ready to welcome your new compeer!—advertised with the special recommendation, that the said epic poem contains more than a hundred names of living persons! No—if works as abhorrent, as those of Major Cartwright, from all unworthy provocatives to vanity, envy, and the selfish passions, could acquire a sufficient influence on the public mind to be mischievous, the plans proposed in his pamphlets would cease to be altogether visionary: though even then they could not ground their claims to actual adoption on self-evident principles of pure reason, but on the happy accident of the virtue and good sense

of that public, for whose suffrages they were presented. Indeed with Major Cartwright's plans I have no present concern; but with the principles, on which he grounds the obligations to adopt them.

But I must not sacrifice truth to my reverence for individual purity of intention. The tendency of one good man's writings is altogether a different thing from the tendency of the system itself, when seasoned and served up for the unreasoning multitude, as it has been by men whose names I would not honour by writing them in the same sentence with Major Cartwright's. For this system has two sides, and holds out very different attractions to its admirers who advance towards it from different points of the compass. It possesses qualities, that can scarcely fail of winning over to its banners a numerous host of shallow heads and restless tempers, men who without learning,—or, as one of my friends has forcibly expressed it, strong bookmindedness,—live as alms-folks on the opinions of their contemporaries, and who,—well pleased to exchange the humility of regret for the self-complacent feelings of contempt,—reconcile themselves to the *sans-culotterie* of their ignorance, by scoffing at the useless fox-brush of pedantry.* The attachment of this numerous class is owing neither to the solidity and depth of foundation in this theory, nor

* He (*Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk*) knowing that learning hath no enemy but ignorance, did suspect always the want of it in those men who derided the habit of it in others: like the fox in the fable, who being without a tail would persuade others to cut off theirs as a burthen. But he liked well the philosopher's division of men into three ranks—some who knew good and were willing to teach others; these he said were like gods among men—others who though they knew not much, yet were willing to learn; these he said were like men among beasts—and some who knew not good and yet despised such as should teach them; these he esteemed as beasts among men.

Lloyd's State Worthies, p. 33.

to the strict coherence of its arguments; and still less to any genuine reverence for humanity in the abstract. The physiocratic system promises to deduce all things, and every thing relative to law and government, with mathematical exactness and certainty, from a few individual and self-evident principles. But who so dull, as not to be capable of apprehending a simple self-evident principle, and of following a short demonstration? By this system 'the system' as its admirers were wont to call it, even as they named the writer who first applied it in systematic detail to the whole constitution and administration of civil policy,—Du Quesnoy—*le docteur*, or 'the teacher;'—by this system the observation of times, places, relative bearings, history, national customs and character, is rendered superfluous;—all, in short, which, according to the common notion, makes the attainment of legislative prudence a work of difficulty and long-continued effort, even for the acutest and most comprehensive minds. The cautious balancing of comparative advantages, the painful calculation of forces and counterforces, the preparation of circumstances, the lynx-eyed watching for opportunities, are all superseded; and by the magic oracles of certain axioms and definitions it is revealed how the world with all its concerns should be mechanized, and then let go on of itself. All the positive institutions and regulations, which the prudence of our ancestors had provided, are declared to be erroneous or interested perversions of the natural relations of man; and the whole is delivered over to the faculty, which all men possess equally, namely, the common sense or universal reason. The science of politics, it is said, is but the application of the common sense, which every man possesses, to a subject in which every man is concerned. To be a musician, an orator, a painter, a

poet, an architect, or even to be a good mechanist, presupposes genius; to be an excellent artizan or mechanic, requires more than an average degree of talent; but to be a legislator requires nothing but common sense. The commonest human intellect therefore suffices for a perfect insight into the whole science of civil polity, and qualifies the possessor to sit in judgment on the constitution and administration of his own country, and of all other nations. This must needs be agreeable tidings to the great mass of mankind. There is no subject, which men in general like better to harangue on than politics; none, the deciding on which more flatters the sense of self-importance. For as to what Johnson calls 'plebeian envy,'* I do not believe that the mass of men are justly chargeable with it in their political feelings; not only because envy is seldom excited except by definite and individual objects, but still more because it is a painful passion, and not likely to co-exist with the high delight and self-complacency with which the harangues on states and statesmen, princes and generals, are made and listened to in ale-house circles or promiscuous public meetings. A certain portion of this is not merely desirable, but necessary in a free country. Heaven forbid that the most ignorant of my countrymen should be deprived of a subject so well fitted to

impart

An hour's importance to the poor man's heart! †

But a system which not only flatters the pride and

* I now more than fear that Dr. Johnson was in the right: and that I must recant my opinion with "Coleridge! thy wish was father to that thought, not a clearer insight into the nature of man, not a wider experience of men."—October 20th, 1818.

† *Deserted Village.*—Ed.

vanity of men, but which in so plausible and intelligible a manner persuades them, not that this is wrong and that ought to have been managed otherwise; or that Mr. X. is worth a hundred of Mr. Y. as a minister or Parliament man; but that all is wrong and mistaken,—nay, almost unjust and wicked,—and that every man is competent, and in contempt of all rank and property, on the mere title of his personality, possesses the right, and is under the most solemn moral obligation, to give a helping hand toward overthrowing all;—this confusion of political with religious claims, this transfer of the rights of religion disjoined from the austere duties of self-denial, with which religious rights exercised in their proper sphere cannot fail to be accompanied; and not only disjoined from self-restraint, but united with the indulgence of those passions,—self-will, love of power,—which it is the principal aim and hardest task of religion to correct and restrain;—this, I say, is altogether different from the village politics of yore, and may be pronounced alarming and of dangerous tendency by the boldest advocates of reform not less consistently, than by the most timid eschewers of popular disturbance.

Still, however, the system had its golden side for the noblest minds: and I should act the part of a coward, if I disguised my convictions, that the errors of the aristocratic party were full as gross, and far less excusable. Instead of contenting themselves with opposing the real blessings of English law to the splendid promises of untried theory, too large a part of those, who called themselves anti-Jacobins, did all in their power to suspend those blessings; and thus furnished new arguments to the advocates of innovation, when they should have been answering the old ones. The most prudent, as well as the most honest, mode of defending the exist-

arrangements would have been, to have candidly admitted what could not with truth be denied, and then have shewn that, though the things complained of were evils, they were necessary evils; or if they were movable, yet that the consequences of the heroic medicines recommended by the revolutionists would be more dreadful than the disease. Now either the one or the other point, by the double aid of history and sound philosophy, they might have established with a certain little short of demonstration, and with such colours and illustrations as would have taken strong hold of the very feelings which had attached to the democratic system all the good and valuable men of the party. But instead of this they precluded the possibility of being softened to even by the gentlest and most ingenuous among the friends of the French revolution, by denying or attempting to palliate facts, which were equally notorious and unjustifiable, and by supplying the lack of reason by an overflow of gall. While they lamented with tragic outcries the injured monarch and the exiled noble, they displayed the most disgusting insensibility to the privations, sufferings, and manifold oppressions of the great mass of the continental population, and a blindness or callousness still more offensive to the crimes and execrable abominations of their oppressors.* Not only was the Bastille justified, but the Spanish Inquisition itself;—and this in a pamphlet passionately extolled and industriously circulated by the adherents of the present ministry. Thus, and by their infatuated panegyrics

* I do not mean the sovereigns, but the old nobility of both Germany and France. The extravagantly false and flattering picture, which Burke gave of the French nobility and hierarchy, has always appeared to me the greatest defect of his, in so many respects, invaluable work.

on the former state of France, they played into the hands of their worst and most dangerous antagonists. In confounding the conditions of the English and the French peasantry, and in quoting the authorities of Milton, Sidney, and their immortal compeers, as applicable to the present times and the existing government, the demagogues appeared to talk only the same language as the anti-Jacobins themselves employed. For if the vilest calumnies of obsolete bigots were applied against these great men by the one party, with equal plausibility might their authorities be adduced, and their arguments for increasing the power of the people be re-applied to the existing government, by the other. If the most disgusting forms of despotism were spoken of by the one in the same respectful language as the executive power of our own country, what wonder if the irritated partizans of the other were able to impose on the populace the converse of the proposition, and to confound the executive branch of the English sovereignty with the despotisms of less happy lands? The first duty of a wise advocate is to convince his opponents, that he understands their arguments and sympathizes with their just feelings. But instead of this, these pretended constitutionalists resorted to the language of insult, and to measures of persecution. In order to oppose Jacobinism they imitated it in its worst features; in personal slander, in illegal violence, and even in the thirst for blood. They justified the corruptions of the state in the same spirit of sophistry, by the same vague arguments of general reason, and the same disregard of ancient ordinances and established opinions, with which the state itself had been attacked by the Jacobins. The wages of state-dependence were represented as no less sacred than the property won by industry or derived from a long line of ancestors.

It was, indeed, evident to thinking men, that both parties were playing the same game with different counters. If the Jacobins ran wild with the rights of man, and the abstract sovereignty of the people, their antagonists flew off as extravagantly from the sober good sense of our forefathers, and idolized as mere an abstraction in the rights of sovereigns. Nor was this confined to sovereigns. They defended the exemptions and privileges of all privileged orders on the presumption of their inalienable right to them, however inexpedient they might have been found, as universally and absolutely as if these privileges had been decreed by the Supreme Wisdom, instead of being the offspring of chance or violence, or the inventions of human prudence. Thus, while they deemed themselves defending, they were in reality blackening and degrading the uninjurious and useful privileges of our English nobility, which rest on nobler and securer grounds. Thus too, the necessity of compensations for dethroned princes was affirmed as familiarly, as if kingdoms had been private estates: and no more disapprobation was expressed at the transfer of five or ten millions of men from one proprietor to another, than of as many score head of cattle. This most degrading and superannuated superstition, or rather this ghost of a defunct absurdity raised up by the necromancy of a violent reaction,—such as the extreme of one system is sure to occasion in the adherents of its opposite,—was more than once allowed to regulate our measures in the conduct of a war on which the integrity of the British empire and the progressive civilization of all mankind depended. I could mention possessions of paramount and indispensable importance to first-rate national interests, the nominal sovereign of which had delivered up all his sea-ports and strongholds to the French, and maintained a French

army in his dominions, and had therefore, by the law of nations, made his territories French dependencies—which possessions were not to be touched, though the natural inhabitants were eager to place themselves under our permanent protection—and why?—They were the property of the king of Naples! All the grandeur and majesty of the law of nations, which taught our ancestors to distinguish between a European sovereign and the miserable despots of oriental barbarism, and to consider the former as the representative of the nation which he governed, and as inextricably connected with its fortunes as sovereign, were merged in the basest personality. Instead of the interests of mighty nations, it seemed as if a mere law-suit were carrying on between John Doe and Richard Roe! The happiness of millions was light in the balance, weighed against a theatric compassion for one individual and his family, who,—I speak from facts that I myself know—if they feared the French more, hated us worse. Though the restoration of good sense commenced during the interval of the peace at Amiens, yet it was not till the Spanish insurrection that Englishmen of all parties recurred, *in toto*, to the old English principles, and spoke of their Hampdens, Sidneys, and Miltons, with the old enthusiasm. During the last war, an acquaintance of mine—least of all men a political zealot—had named a vessel which he had just built—The Liberty; and was seriously admonished by his aristocratic friends to change it for some other name. What? replied the owner very innocently—should I call it The Freedom? That (it was replied) would be far better, as people might then think only of freedom of trade; whereas Liberty had a jacobinical sound with it! Alas! (and this is an observation of Denham and of Burke) is there then no medium between an ague-fit and a frenzy-fever?

I have said that to withstand the arguments of the lawless, the anti-Jacobins proposed to suspend the law, and by the interposition of a particular statute to eclipse the blessed light of the universal sun, that spies and informers might tyrannize and escape in the ominous darkness. Oh! if these mistaken men, intoxicated with alarm and bewildered by that panic of property, which they themselves were the chief agents in exciting, had ever lived in a country where there was indeed a general disposition to change and rebellion! Had they ever travelled through Sicily, or through France at the first coming on of the revolution, or even alas! through too many of the provinces of a sister-island, they could not but have shrunk from their own declarations concerning the state of feeling and opinion at that time predominant throughout Great Britain. There was a time—Heaven grant that that time may have passed by!—when by crossing a narrow strait they might have learned the true symptoms of approaching danger, and have secured themselves from mistaking the meetings and idle rant of such sedition as shrank appalled from the sight of a constable, for the dire murmuring and strange consternation which precedes the storm or earthquake of national discord. Not only in coffee-houses and public theatres, but even at the tables of the wealthy, they would have heard the advocates of existing government defend their cause in the language and with the tone of men, who are conscious that they are in a minority. But in England, when the alarm was at the highest, there was not a city, no, not a town in which a man suspected of holding democratic principles could move abroad without receiving some unpleasant proof of the hatred in which his supposed opinions were held by the great majority of the people: and the only instances of popular excess and indignation

were on the side of the government and the established church. But why need I appeal to these invidious facts? Turn over the pages of history, and seek for a single instance of a revolution having been effected without the concurrence of either the nobles, or the ecclesiastics, or the monied classes, in any country in which the influences of property had ever been predominant, and where the interests of the proprietors were interlinked! Examine the revolution of the Belgic provinces under Philip II.; the civil wars of France in the preceding generation, the history of the American revolution, or the yet more recent events in Sweden and in Spain; and it will be scarcely possible not to perceive, that in England, from 1791 to the peace of Amiens, there were neither tendencies to confederacy nor actual confederacies, against which the existing laws had not provided both sufficient safeguards and an ample punishment. But alas! the panic of property had been struck in the first instance for party purposes; and when it became general, its propagators caught it themselves, and ended in believing their own lie;—even as the bulls in Borodale are said sometimes to run mad with the echo of their own bellowing. The consequences were most injurious. Our attention was concentrated on a monster which could not survive the convulsions in which it had been brought forth,—even the enlightened Burke himself too often talking and reasoning as if a perpetual and organized anarchy had been a possible thing! Thus while we were warring against French doctrines, we took little heed whether the means by which we attempted to overthrow them, were not likely to aid and augment the far more formidable evil of French ambition. Like children we ran away from the yelping of a cur and took shelter at the heels of a vicious war-horse.

The conduct of the aristocratic party was equally unwise in private life and to individuals, especially to the young and inexperienced, who were surely to be forgiven for having had their imagination dazzled, and their enthusiasm kindled, by a novelty so specious, that even an old and tried statesman, Mr. Fox, had pronounced it a stupendous monument of human wisdom and human happiness. This was indeed a gross delusion, but assuredly for young men at least, a very venial one. To hope too boldly of human nature is a fault which all good men have an interest in forgiving. Nor was it less removable than venial, if the party had taken the only way by which the error could be, or even ought to have been, removed. Having first sympathized with the warm benevolence and the enthusiasm for liberty, which had consecrated it, they should have then shewn the young enthusiasts that liberty was not the only blessing of society; that, though desirable, even for its own sake, it yet derived its main value as the means of calling forth and securing other advantages and excellencies, the activities of industry, the security of life and property, the peaceful energies of genius and manifold talent, the development of the moral virtues, and the independence and dignity of the nation in its relations to foreign powers: and that neither these nor liberty itself could subsist in a country so various in its soils, so long inhabited and so fully peopled as Great Britain, without difference of ranks, and without laws which recognized and protected the privileges of each. But instead of thus winning them back from the snare, they too often drove them into it by angry contumelies, which being in contradiction with each other could only excite contempt for those that uttered them. To prove the folly of the opinions, they were represented as the crude fancies of

unfledged wits and school-boy statesmen ; but when abhorrence was to be expressed, the self-same unfledged school-boys were invested with all the attributes of brooding conspiracy and hoary-headed treason. Nay, a sentence of absolute reprobation was passed on them ; and the speculative error of Jacobinism was equalized to the mysterious sin in Scripture, which in some inexplicable manner excludes not only mercy but even repentance. It became the watch-word of the party, once a Jacobin always a Jacobin. And wherefore ?* I will suppose this question asked by an individual, who in his youth or earliest manhood had been enamoured of a system, which for him had combined at once the austere beauty of science with all the light and colours of imagination, and with all the warmth of wide religious charity, and who, overlooking its ideal essence, had dreamed of actually building a government on personal and natural rights alone.—And wherefore ? Is Jacobinism an absurdity, and have we no understanding by which to detect it ? Is it productive of all misery and all horrors, and have we no natural humanity to make us turn away with indignation and loathing from it ? Uproar and confusion, insecurity of person and of property, the tyranny of mobs or the domination of a soldiery ; private houses changed to brothels, the ceremony of marriage but an initiation to harlotry, and marriage itself degraded to mere concubinage—these, the wiser advocates of aristocracy have said, and truly said, are the effects of Jacobinism ! In private life, an insufferable licentiousness,

* The passage which follows was first published in the Morning Post, in the year 1800, and contained, if I mistake not, the first philosophical appropriation of a precise import to the word Jacobin, as distinct from republican, democrat, and demagogue. [The article appeared Oct. 21, 1802. S. C.]

and abroad an intolerable despotism. Once a Jacobin, always a Jacobin—O wherefore? Is it because the creed which we have **stated** is dazzling at first sight to the young, the innocent, the disinterested, and to those, who judging of men in general from their own uncorrupted hearts, judge **erroneously**, and expect unwisely? Is it, because it deceives the mind in its purest and most flexible period? Is it, because it is an error, that every day's experience aids to detect? An error against which all history is full of **warning** examples? Or is it because the experiment has been tried before our eyes and the error made palpable?

From what source are we to derive this strange *phenomenon*, that the young and the enthusiastic, who, as our daily experience informs us, are deceived in their religious antipathies, and grow wiser; in their friendships, and grow wiser; in their modes of pleasure, and grow wiser; should, if once deceived in a question of abstract politics, cling to the error for ever and ever? And this too, although in addition to the natural growth of judgment and information with increase of years, they live in the age in which the tenets have been acted upon; and though the consequences have been such, that every good man's heart sickens, and his head turns giddy at the retrospect.



ESSAY VI.

Truth I pursued, as fancy sketched the way,
And wiser men than I went worse astray.

I WAS never myself, at any period of my life, a convert to the Jacobinical system.* From my earliest manhood, it was an axiom in politics with me, that in every country where property prevailed, property must be the grand basis of the government: and that that government was the best, in which the power or political influence of the individual was in proportion to his property, provided that the free circulation of property was not impeded by any positive laws or customs, nor the tendency of wealth to accumulate in abiding masses unduly encouraged. I perceived, that if the people at large were neither ignorant nor immoral, there could be no motive for a sudden and violent change of government; and if they were, there could be no hope but of a change for the worse. The temple of despotism, like that of the Mexican God, would be rebuilt with human skulls, and more firmly, though in a different style of architecture.† Thanks to the excellent education which I had received, my reason was too clear not to draw this circle of power round me, and my spirit too honest to attempt to break through it. My feelings, however, and imagination did

* See Essay xii. of this volume.—*Ed.*

† To the best of my recollection, these were Mr. Southey's words in the year 1794.

not remain unkindled in this general conflagration ; and I confess I should be more inclined to be ashamed than proud of myself, if they had. I was a sharer in the general vortex, though my little world described the path of its revolution in an orbit of its own. What I dared not expect from constitutions of government and whole nations, I hoped from religion and a small company of chosen individuals. I formed a plan, as harmless as it was extravagant, of trying the experiment of human perfectibility on the banks of the Susquehanna ; where our little society, in its second generation, was to have combined the innocence of the patriarchal age with the knowledge and genuine refinements of European culture ; and where I dreamed that in the sober evening of my life, I should behold the cottages of independence in the undivided dale of industry,—

And oft, soothed sadly by some dirgeful wind,
Muse on the sore ills I had left behind !

Strange fancies, and as vain as strange ! yet to the intense interest and impassioned zeal, which called forth and strained every faculty of my intellect for the organization and defence of this scheme, I owe much of whatever I at present possess, my clearest insight into the nature of individual man, and my most comprehensive views of his social relations, of the true uses of trade and commerce, and how far the wealth and relative power of nations promote or impede their welfare and inherent strength. Nor were they less serviceable in securing myself, and perhaps some others, from the pitfalls of sedition : and when we at length alighted on the firm ground of common sense from the gradually exhausted balloon of youthful enthusiasm, though the air-built castles, which we had been pursuing, had vanished with

all their pageantry of shifting forms and glowing colours, we were yet free from the stains and impurities which might have remained upon us, had we been travelling with the crowd of less imaginative malcontents, through the dark lanes and foul by-roads of ordinary fanaticism.

But oh! there were thousands as young and as innocent as myself who, not like me, sheltered in the tranquil nook or inland cove of a particular fancy, were driven along with the general current! Many there were, young men of loftiest minds, yea, the prime stuff out of which manly wisdom and practical greatness are to be formed, who had appropriated their hopes and the ardour of their souls to mankind at large, to the wide expanse of national interests, which then seemed fermenting in the French republic as in the main outlet and chief crater of the revolutionary torrents; and who confidently believed, that these torrents, like the lavas of Vesuvius, were to subside into a soil of inexhaustible fertility on the circumjacent lands, the old divisions and mouldering edifices of which they had covered or swept away—enthusiasts of kindest temperament, who to use the words of the poet, having already borrowed the meaning and the metaphor, had approached

the shield
Of human nature from the golden side,
And would have fought even to the death to attest
The quality of the metal which they saw.

My honoured friend Mr. Wordsworth has permitted me to give a value and relief to the present essay, by a quotation from one of his unpublished poems, the length of which I regret only from its forbidding me to trespass on his kindness by making it yet longer. I trust there are many of my readers of the same age with myself,

who will throw themselves back into the state of thought and feeling in which they were when France was reported to have solemnized her first sacrifice of error and prejudice on the bloodless altar of freedom, by an oath of peace and good-will to all mankind.

Oh ! pleasant exercise of hope and joy !
 For mighty were the auxiliars, which then stood
 Upon our side, we who were strong in love.
 Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive,
 But to be young was very heaven ;—Oh ! times,
 In which the meagre stale forbidding ways
 Of custom, law, and statute, took at once
 The attraction of a country in romance ;
 When reason seem'd the most to assert her right,
 When most intent on making of herself
 A prime enchanter to assist the work,
 Which then was going forward in her name.
 Not favour'd spots alone, but the whole earth
 The beauty wore of promise—that which sets
 (To take an image which was felt no doubt
 Among the bowers of Paradise itself)
 The budding rose above the rose, full blown.
 What temper at the prospect did not wake
 To happiness unthought of ! The inert
 Were roused, and lively natures rapt away.
 They who had fed their childhood upon dreams,
 The play-fellows of fancy, who had made
 All powers of swiftness, subtilty, and strength
 Their ministers, used to stir in lordly wise
 Among the grandest objects of the sense,
 And deal with whatsoever they found there
 As if they had within some lurking right
 To wield it ;—they too, who of gentle mood
 Had watch'd all gentle motions, and to these
 Had fitted their own thoughts, schemers more mild
 And in the region of their peaceful selves ;—
 Now was it that both found, the meek and lofty
 Did both find helpers to their heart's desire
 And stuff at hand, plastic as they could wish—
 Were call'd upon to exercise their skill
 Not in Utopia, subterraneous fields,
 Or some secreted island, Heaven knows where,
 But in the very world, which is the world
 Of all of us, the place where in the end
 We find our happiness, or not at all.

The peace of Amiens deserved the name of peace, for it gave us unanimity at home, and reconciled Englishmen with each other. Yet it would be as wild a fancy as any of which I have treated, to expect that the violence of party spirit is never more to return. Sooner or later the same causes, or their equivalents, will call forth the same opposition of opinion, and bring the same passions into play. Ample would be my recompense, could I foresee that this present essay would be the means of preventing discord and unhappiness in a single family; if its words of warning, aided by its tones of sympathy, should arm a single man of genius against the fascinations of his own ideal world, a single philanthropist against the enthusiasm of his own heart. Not less would be my satisfaction, dared I flatter myself that my lucubrations would not be altogether without effect on those who deem themselves men of judgment, faithful to the light of practice, and not to be led astray by the wandering fires of theory;—if I should aid in making these aware, that in recoiling with too incautious an abhorrence from the bugbears of innovation, they may sink all at once into the slough of slavishness and corruption. Let such persons recollect that the charms of hope and novelty furnish some palliation for the idolatry to which they seduce the mind; but that the apotheosis of similar abuses and of the errors of selfishness is the vilest of superstitions. Let them recollect, too, that nothing can be more incongruous than to combine the pusillanimity, which despairs of human improvement, with the arrogance, supercilious contempt, and boisterous anger, which have no pretensions to pardon, except as the overflowings of ardent anticipation and enthusiastic faith. And finally, and above all, let it be remembered by both parties, and indeed by controversialists on all subjects, that every speculative error while

boasts a multitude of advocates, has its golden as well as its dark side; that there is always some truth connected with it, the exclusive attention to which has misled the understanding, some moral beauty which has given it charms for the heart. Let it be remembered that no assailant of an error can reasonably hope to be listened to by its advocates, who has not proved to them that he has seen the disputed subject in the same point of view, and is capable of contemplating it with the same feelings as themselves; for why should we abandon a cause at the persuasions of one who is ignorant of the reasons which have attached us to it? Let it be remembered, that to write, however ably, merely to convince those who are already convinced, displays but the courage of a boaster; and in any subject to rail against the evil before we have inquired for the good, and to exasperate the passions of those who think with us, by caricaturing the opinions and blackening the motives of our antagonists, is to make the understanding the pander of the passions; and even though we should have defended the right cause, to gain for ourselves ultimately from the good and the wise no other praise than the supreme Judge awarded to the friends of Job for their partial and uncharitable defence of his justice: *My wrath is kindled against you, for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right.**

* Job xlii. 7.—*Ed.*

ESSAY VII.

ON THE VULGAR ERRORS RESPECTING TAXES AND TAXATION.

Ὅπερ γὰρ οἱ τὰς ἐγχέλεις θηρώμενοι πέπονθας·
Ὅταν μὲν ἡ λίμνη καταστή, λαμβάνουσιν οὐδέν·
Ἐάν δ' ἄνω τε καὶ κάτω τὸν βόρβορον κινῶσιν,
Λιθοῦσι· καὶ σὺ λαμβάνεις, ἢν τὴν πόλιν ταράττῃς.*

It is with you as with those that are hunting for eels. While the pond is clear and settled, they take nothing; but if they stir up the mud high and low, then they bring up the fish:—and you succeed only as far as you can set the state in tumult and confusion.

In a passage in the last essay, I referred to the second part of the "Rights of Man," in which Paine assures his readers that their poverty is the consequence of taxation: that taxes are rendered necessary only by wars and state corruption; that war and corruption are entirely owing to monarchy and aristocracy; that by a revolution and a brotherly alliance with the French republic, our land and sea forces, our revenue officers, and three-fourths of our pensioners, placemen, and other functionaries, would be rendered superfluous; and that a small part of the expenses thus saved, would suffice for the maintenance of the poor, the infirm, and the aged, throughout the kingdom. Would to God that this infamous mode of misleading and flattering the lower classes were confined to the writings of Thomas Paine! But how often do we

* Aristoph. Equites, v. 384, &c.—Ed.

hear, even from the mouths of our parliamentary advocates for popularity, the taxes stated as so much money actually lost to the people; and a nation in debt represented as the same both in kind and consequences, as an individual tradesman on the brink of bankruptcy! It is scarcely possible, that these men should be themselves deceived; that they should be so ignorant of history as not to know that the freest nations, being at the same time commercial, have been at all times the most heavily taxed: or so void of common sense as not to see that there is no analogy in the case of a tradesman and his creditors, to a nation indebted to itself. Surely, a much fairer instance would be that of a husband and wife playing cards at the same table against each other, where what the one loses the other gains. Taxes may be indeed, and often are, injurious to a country: at no time, however, from their amount merely, but from the time or injudicious mode in which they are raised. A great statesman, lately deceased, in one of his anti-ministerial harangues against some proposed impost, said,—‘the nation has been already bled in every vein, and is faint with loss of blood.’ This blood, however, was circulating in the mean time through the whole body of the state, and what was received into one chamber of the heart was instantly sent out again at the other portal. Had he wanted a metaphor to convey the possible injuries of taxation, he might have found one less opposite to the fact, in the known disease of aneurism, or relaxation of the coats of particular vessels, by a disproportionate accumulation of blood in them, which sometimes occurs when the circulation has been suddenly and violently changed, and causes helplessness, or even mortal stagnation, though the total quantity of blood remains the same in the system at large.

But a fuller and fairer symbol of taxation, both in its possible good and evil effects, is to be found in the evaporation of waters from the surface of the planet. The sun may draw up the moisture from the river, the morass, and the ocean, to be given back in genial showers to the garden, the pasture, and the corn-field ; but it may likewise force away the moisture from the fields of tillage, to drop it on the stagnant pool, the saturated swamp, or the unprofitable sand-waste. The gardens in the south of Europe supply, perhaps, a not less apt illustration of a system of finance judiciously conducted, where the tanks or reservoirs would represent the capital of a nation, and the hundred rills hourly varying their channels and directions under the gardener's spade, give a pleasing image of the dispersion of that capital through the whole population, by the joint effect of taxation and trade. For taxation itself is a part of commerce, and the government may be fairly considered as a great manufacturing house, carrying on in different places, by means of its partners and overseers, the trades of the ship-builder, the clothier, the iron-founder, and the like.

There are so many real evils, so many just causes of complaint in the constitution and administration of governments, our own not excepted, that it becomes the imperious duty of every well-wisher of his country, to prevent, as much as in him lies, the feelings and efforts of his compatriots from losing themselves on a wrong scent. Whether a system of taxation is injurious or beneficial on the whole, is to be known, not by the amount of the sum taken from each individual, but by that which remains behind. A war will doubtless cause a stagnation of certain branches of trade, and severe temporary distress in the places where those branches are carried on ; but are not the same effects produced in time of peace by

prohibitory edicts and commercial regulations of foreign powers, or by new rivals with superior advantages in other countries, or in different parts of the same? Bristol has, doubtless, been injured by the rapid prosperity of Liverpool and its superior spirit of enterprise; and the vast machines of Lancashire have overwhelmed and rendered hopeless the domestic industry of the females in the cottages and small farm-houses of Westmoreland and Cumberland. But if peace has its stagnations as well as war, does not war create or re-enliven numerous branches of industry as well as peace? Is it not a fact, that not only our own military and naval forces, but even a part of those of our enemy are armed and clothed by British manufacturers? It cannot be doubted, that the whole of our immense military force is better and more expensively clothed, and both these and our sailors better fed than the same persons would be in their individual capacities: and this forms one of the real expenses of war. Not, I say, that so much more money is raised, but that so much more of the means of comfortable existence are consumed, than would otherwise have been. But does not this, like all other luxury, act as a stimulus on the producing classes, and this in the most useful manner, and on the most important branches of production, on the tiller, on the grazier, the clothier and the maker of arms? Had it been otherwise, is it possible that the receipts from the property tax should have increased, instead of decreased, notwithstanding all the rage of our enemy?

Surely, never from the beginning of the world was such a tribute of admiration paid by one power to another, as Buonaparte within the last few years has paid to the British empire. With all the natural and artificial powers of almost the whole of continental Europe, with

all the fences and obstacles of all public and private morality broken down before him, with a mighty empire of fifty millions of men, nearly two-thirds of whom speak the same language, and are as it were fused together by the intensest nationality; with this mighty and swarming empire, organized in all its parts for war, and forming one huge camp, and himself combining in his own person the two-fold power of monarch and commander-in-chief;—with all these advantages, with all these stupendous instruments and inexhaustible resources of offence, this mighty being finds himself imprisoned by the enemy whom he most hates, and would fain despise, insulted by every wave that breaks upon his shores, and condemned to behold his vast flotillas as worthless and idle as the sea-weed that rots around their keels!• After years of haughty menace and expensive preparations for the invasion of an island, the trees and buildings of which are visible from the roofs of his naval store-houses, he is at length compelled to make open confession, that he possesses one mean only of ruining Great Britain. And what is it? The ruin of his own enslaved subjects. To undermine the resources of one enemy, he reduces the continent of Europe to the wretched state in which it was before the wide diffusions of trade and commerce, deprives its inhabitants of comforts and advantages to which they and their fathers had been for more than a century habituated, and thus destroys, as far as his power extends, a principal source of civilization, the origin of a middle class throughout Christendom, and with it the true balance of society, the parent of international law, the foster-nurse of general humanity, and, to sum up all in one, the main principle of attraction and repulsion, by

• Letters to the Spaniards. S. C.

which the nations were rapidly, though insensibly, drawing together into one system, and by which alone they could combine the manifold blessings of distinct character and national independence, with the needful stimulation and general influences of intercommunity, and be virtually united, without being crushed together by conquest, in order to waste away under the *tabes* and slow putrefaction of a universal monarchy. This boasted pacificator of the world, this earthly Providence,* as his Roman Catholic bishops blasphemously call him, professes to entertain no hope of purchasing the destruction of Great Britain at a less price than that of the barbarism of all Europe. By the ordinary war of government against government, fleets against fleets, and armies against armies, he could effect nothing. His fleets might as well have been built at his own expense in our dockyards, as tribute offerings to the masters of the ocean: whilst his army of England lay encamped on his coasts like wolves baying the moon!

Delightful to humane and contemplative minds was the idea of countless individual efforts working together by a common instinct and to a common object, under the protection of an unwritten code of religion, philosophy, and common interest, which made peace and brotherhood co-exist with the most active hostility. Not in the untamed plains of Tartary, but in the very bosom

* It has been well remarked, that there is something far more shocking in Buonaparte's pretensions to the gracious attributes of the Supreme Ruler, than in his most remorseless cruelties. There is a sort of wild grandeur, not ungratifying to the imagination, in the answer of Timur Khan to one who remonstrated with him on the inhumanity of his devastations: *cur me hominem putas, et non potius iram Dei in terris agentem ob perniciem humani generis?* Why do you deem me a man, and not rather the incarnate wrath of God acting on the earth for the ruin of mankind?

of civilization, and himself indebted to its fostering care for his own education, and for all the means of his elevation and power, did this genuine offspring of the old serpent warm himself into the fiend-like resolve of waging war against mankind and the quiet growth of the world's improvement—in an emphatic sense the enemy of the human race. By these means only he deems Great Britain assailable,—a strong presumption, that our prosperity is built on the common interest of mankind ;—this he acknowledges to be his only hope—and in this hope he has been utterly baffled.

To what then do we owe our strength and our immunity ? To the sovereignty of law,—the incorruptness of its administration,—our national church,—our religious sects,—the purity, or at least the decorum, of private morals, and the independence, activity, and weight, of public opinion ? — These and similar advantages are doubtless the materials of the fortress, but what has been the cement ? What has bound them together ? What has rendered Great Britain, from the Orkneys to the rocks of Scilly, indeed and with more than metaphorical propriety, a body politic,—our roads, rivers, and canals being so truly the veins, arteries, and nerves of the state, that every pulse in the metropolis produces a correspondent pulsation in the remotest village on its extreme shores ? What made the stoppage of the national bank the conversation of a day without causing one irregular throb, or the stagnation of the commercial current, in the minutest vessel ? I answer without hesitation, that the cause and mother principle of this unexampled confidence, of this system of credit, which is as much stronger than mere positive possessions, as the soul of man is than his body, or as the force of a mighty mass in free motion, than the pressure of its separate com

ponent parts in a state of rest—the main cause of this, I say, has been our national debt. What its injurious effects on the literature, the morals, and religious principles of this country, have been, I shall hereafter develope with the same boldness. But as to our political strength and circumstantial prosperity, it is the national debt which has wedded in indissoluble union all the interests of the state, the landed with the commercial, and the man of independent fortune with the stirring tradesman and reposing annuitant. It is the national debt, which, by the rapid nominal rise in the value of things, has made it impossible for any considerable number of men to retain their own former comforts without joining in the common industry, and adding to the stock of national produce ; which thus first necessitates a general activity, and then by the immediate and ample credit, which is never wanting to him, who has any object on which his activity can employ itself, gives each man the means not only of preserving but of increasing and multiplying all his former enjoyments, and all the symbols of the rank in which he was born. It is this which has planted the naked hills and inclosed the bleak wastes in the lowlands of Scotland not less than in the wealthier districts of South Britain : it is this, which, leaving all the other causes of patriotism and national fervour undiminished and uninjured, has added to our public duties the same feeling of necessity, the same sense of immediate self-interest, which in other countries actuates the members of a single family in their conduct toward each other.

Somewhat more than a year ago, I happened to be on a visit with a friend, in a small market town* in the south-west of England, when one of the company turned

* Nether Stowey.—Ed.

the conversation to the weight of taxes and the consequent hardness of the times. I answered, that if the taxes were a real weight, and that in proportion to their amount, we must have been ruined long ago : for Mr. Hume, who had proceeded, as on a self-evident axiom, on the hypothesis, that the debt of a nation was the same as the debt of an individual, had declared our ruin arithmetically demonstrable, if the national debt increased beyond a certain sum. Since his time it has more than quintupled that sum, and yet—True, answered my friend, but the principle might be right, though he might have been mistaken in the time. But still, I rejoined, if the principle were right, the nearer we came to that given point, and the greater and the more active the pernicious cause became, the more manifest would its effects be. We might not be absolutely ruined, but our embarrassments would increase in some proportion to their cause. Whereas, instead of being poorer and poorer, we are richer and richer. Will any man in his senses contend, that the actual labour and produce of the country has not only been decupled within half a century, but increased so prodigiously beyond that decuple as to make six hundred millions a less weight to us than fifty millions were in the days of our grandfathers ? But if it really be so, to what can we attribute this stupendous progression of national improvement, but to that system of credit and paper currency, of which the national debt is both the reservoir and the water-works ? A constant cause should have constant effects ; but if you deem that this is some anomaly, some strange exception to the general rule, explain its mode of operation, make it comprehensible, how a cause acting on a whole nation can produce a regular and rapid increase of prosperity to a certain point, and then all at once pass from an an

of light into a dæmon of destruction ! That an individual house may live more and more luxuriously upon borrowed funds, and that when the suspicions of the creditors are awakened, and their patience exhausted, the luxurious spendthrift may all at once exchange his palace for a prison—this I can understand perfectly : for I understand, whence the luxuries could be produced for the consumption of the individual house, and who the creditors might be, and that it might be both their inclination and their interests to demand the debt, and to punish the insolvent debtor. But who are a nation's creditors ? The answer is, every man to every man. Whose possible interest could it be either to demand the principal, or to refuse his share toward the means of paying the interest ? Not the merchant's ;—for he would but provoke a crash of bankruptcy, in which his own house would as necessarily be included, as a single card in a house of cards. Not the landholder's ;—for in the general destruction of all credit, how could he obtain payment for the produce of his estates ? Not to mention the improbability that he would remain the undisturbed possessor in so direful a concussion—not to mention that on him must fall the whole weight of the public necessities—not to mention, that from the merchant's credit depends the ever-increasing value of his land and the readiest means of improving it. Neither could it be the labourer's interest ;—for he must be either thrown out of employ, and lie like the fish in the bed of a river from which the water has been diverted, or have the value of his labour reduced to nothing by the inruption of eager competitors. But least of all could it be the wish of the lovers of liberty which must needs perish or be suspended, either by the horrors of anarchy, or by the absolute power, with which the government must be

invested, in order to prevent them. In short, with the exception of men desperate from guilt or debt, or mad with the blackest ambition, there is no class or description of men who can have the least interest in producing or permitting a bankruptcy.

If then, neither experience has acquainted us with any national impoverishment or embarrassment from the increase of national debt, nor theory renders such efforts comprehensible ;—for the predictions of Hume went on the false assumption, that a part only of the nation was interested in the preservation of the public credit ;—on what authority are we to ground our apprehensions ? Does history record a single nation, in which relatively to taxation there were no privileged or exempted classes, in which there were no compulsory prices of labour, and in which the interests of all the different classes and all the different districts, were mutually dependent and vitally co-organized, as in Great Britain,—has history, I say, recorded a single instance of such a nation being ruined or dissolved by the weight of taxation ? In France there was no public credit, no communion of interests : its unprincipled government and the productive and taxable classes were as two individuals with separate interests. Its bankruptcy and the consequences of it are sufficiently comprehensible. Yet the *cahiers*, or the instructions and complaints sent to the National Assembly, from the towns and provinces of France, an immense mass of documents indeed, but without examination and patient perusal of which, no man is entitled to write a history of the French revolution,—these proved, beyond contradiction, that the amount of the taxes was one only, and that a subordinate cause of the revolutionary movement. Indeed, if the amount of the taxes could be disjoined from the mode of raising

them, it might be fairly denied to have been a cause at all. Holland was taxed as heavily and as equally as ourselves ; but was it by taxation that Holland was reduced to its present miseries ?

The mode in which taxes are supposed to act on the marketableness of our manufactures in foreign marts, I shall examine on some future occasion, when I shall endeavour to explain in a more satisfactory way than has been hitherto done, to my apprehension at least, the real mode in which taxes act, and how and why and to what extent they affect the wealth, and what is of more consequence, the well-being of a nation. But in the present exigency, when the safety of the nation depends, on the one hand, on the sense which the people at large have of the comparative excellencies of the laws and government, and on the firmness and wisdom of the legislators and enlightened classes in detecting, exposing, and removing its many particular abuses and corruptions on the other, right views on this subject of taxation are of such especial importance ; and I have besides in my inmost nature such a loathing of factious falsehoods and mob-sycophancy, that is, the flattering of the multitude by informing against their betters ;—that I cannot but revert to that point of the subject from which I began, namely, that the weight of taxes is to be calculated not by what is paid, but by what is left. What matters it to a man, that he pays six times more taxes than his father did, if, notwithstanding, he with the same portion of exertion enjoys twice the comforts which his father did ? Now this I affirm to be the case in general, throughout England, according to all the facts which I have collected during an examination of years, wherever I have travelled, and wherever I have been resident. I do not speak of Ireland, or the Lowlands of

Scotland: and if I may trust to what I myself saw and heard there, I must even except the Highlands. In the conversation which I have spoken of as taking place in the south-west of England, by the assistance of one or other of the company, we went through every family in the town and neighbourhood, and my assertion was found completely accurate, though the place had no one advantage over others, and many disadvantages,—that heavy one in particular, the non-residence and frequent change of its rectors,—the living being always given to one of the canons of Windsor, and resigned on the acceptance of better preferment. It was even asserted, and not only asserted but proved, by my friend,* who has from his earliest youth devoted a strong original understanding, and a heart warm and benevolent even to enthusiasm, to the service of the poor and the labouring class, that every sober labourer, in that part of England at least, who should not marry till thirty, might, without any hardship or extreme self-denial, commence house-keeping at that age, with from a hundred to a hundred and twenty pounds belonging to him. I have no doubt, that on seeing this essay, my friend will communicate to me the proof in detail. But the price of labour in the south-west of England is full one-third less than in the greater number, if not all, of the northern counties. What then is wanting? Not the repeal of taxes; but the increased activity both of the gentry and clergy of the land, in securing the instruction of the lower classes. A system of education is wanting, such a system as that discovered, and to the blessings of thousands realized, by Dr. Bell, which I never am, or can be, weary of praising, while my heart retains any spark of regard for human

* Thomas Poole.—Ed.

nature, or of reverence for human virtue;—a system, by which in the very act of receiving knowledge, the best virtues and most useful qualities of the moral character are awakened, developed, and formed into habits. Were there a Bishop of Durham—no matter whether a temporal or a spiritual lord—in every county or half county, and a clergyman enlightened with the views, and animated with the spirit, of Dr. Bell, in every parish, we might bid defiance to the present weight of taxes, and boldly challenge the whole world to show a peasantry as well fed and clothed as the English, or with equal chances of improving their situation, and of securing an old age of repose and comfort to a life of cheerful industry.

I will add one other anecdote, as it demonstrates incontrovertibly the error of the vulgar opinion, that taxes make things really dear, taking in the whole of a man's expenditure. A friend of mine, who has passed some years in America, was questioned by an American tradesman, in one of their cities of the second class, concerning the names and number of our taxes and rates. The answer seemed perfectly to astound him: and he exclaimed, "How is it possible that men can live in such a country? In this land of liberty we never see the face of a tax-gatherer, nor hear of a duty except in our sea-ports." My friend, who was perfect master of the question, made semblance of turning off the conversation to another subject: and then, without any apparent reference to the former topic, asked the American, for what sum he thought a man could live in such and such a style, with so many servants, in a house of such dimensions and such a situation (still keeping in his mind the situation of a thriving and respectable shopkeeper and householder in different parts of England,) first sup-

posing him to reside in Philadelphia or New York, and then in some town of secondary importance. Having received a detailed answer to these questions, he proceeded to convince the American, that notwithstanding all our taxes, a man might live in the same style, but with incomparably greater comforts, on the same income in London as in New York, and on a considerably less income in Exeter or Bristol, than in any American provincial town of the same relative importance. It would be insulting my readers to discuss on how much less a person may vegetate or brutalize in the back settlements of the republic, than he could live as a man, as a rational and social being, in an English village; and it would be wasting time to inform him, that where men are comparatively few, and unoccupied land is in inexhaustible abundance, the labourer and common mechanic must needs receive—not only nominally, but really—higher wages than in a populous and fully occupied country. But that the American labourer is therefore happier, or even in possession of more comforts and conveniences of life than a sober or industrious English labourer or mechanic, remains to be proved. In conducting the comparison we must not however exclude the operation of moral causes, when these causes are not accidental, but arise out of the nature of the country and the constitution of the government and society. This being the case, take away from the American's wages all the taxes which his insolence, sloth, and attachment to spirituous liquors impose on him, and judge of the remainder by his house, his household furniture, and utensils—and if I have not been grievously deceived by those whose veracity and good sense I have found unquestionable in all other respects, the cottage of an honest English husbandman, in the service of an

lightened and liberal farmer, who is paid for his labour at the price usual in Yorkshire or Northumberland, would in the mind of a man in the same rank of life, who had seen a true account of America, make no impressions favourable to emigration. This however, I confess, is a balance of morals rather than of circumstances: it proves, however, that where foresight and good morals exist, the taxes do not stand in the way of an industrious man's comforts.

Dr. Price almost succeeded in persuading the English nation,—for it is a curious fact, that the fancy of our calamitous situation is a sort of necessary sauce without which our real prosperity would become insipid to us,—Dr. Price, I say, alarmed the country with pretended proofs that the island was in a rapid state of depopulation;—that England at the Revolution had been, Heaven knows how much more populous; and that in Queen Elizabeth's time or about the Reformation, the number of inhabitants in England, might have been greater than even at the Revolution. My old mathematical master, a man of an uncommonly clear head, answered this blundering book of the worthy doctor's, and left not a stone unturned of the pompous cenotaph in which the effigy of the still living and bustling English prosperity lay interred. And yet so much more suitable was the doctor's book to the purposes of faction, and to the November mood of what is called the public, that Mr. Wales's pamphlet, though a masterpiece of perspicacity as well as perspicuity, was scarcely heard of. This tendency to political nightmares in our countrymen reminds me of a superstition, or rather nervous disease, not uncommon in the Highlands of Scotland, in which men, though broad awake, imagine they see themselves lying dead at a small distance from

them. The act of Parliament for ascertaining the population of the empire has laid for ever this uneasy ghost : and now, forsooth, we are on the brink of ruin from the excess of population, and he who would prevent the poor from rotting away in disease, misery, and wickedness, is an enemy to his country. A lately deceased miser, of immense wealth, is reported to have been so delighted with this splendid discovery, as to have offered a handsome annuity to the author, in part of payment for this new and welcome piece of heart-armour. This, however, we may deduce from the fact of our increased population, that if clothing and food had actually become dearer in proportion to the means of procuring them, it would be as absurd to ascribe this effect to increased taxation, as to attribute the scantiness of fare, at a public ordinary, to the landlord's bill, when twice the usual number of guests had sat down to the same number of dishes. But the fact is notoriously otherwise, and every man has the means of discovering it in his own house and in that of his neighbours, provided that he makes the proper allowances for the disturbing forces of individual vice and imprudence. If this be the case, I put it to the consciences of our literary demagogues, whether a lie, for the purposes of creating public disunion and dejection, is not as much a lie, as one for the purpose of exciting discord among individuals. I entreat my readers to recollect, that the present question does not concern the effects of taxation on the public independence and on the supposed balance of the three constitutional powers, from which said balance, as well as from the balance of trade, I own, I have never been able to elicit one ray of common sense. That the nature of our constitution has been greatly modified by the funding system, I do not deny ; — whether

for good or for evil on the whole, will form part of my essay on the British constitution as it actually exists.

There are many and great public evils, all of which are to be lamented, some of which may, and ought to, be removed, and none of which can consistently with wisdom or honesty be kept concealed from the public. As far as these originate in false principles, or in the contempt or neglect of right ones, and as such belonging to the plan of *The Friend*, I shall not hesitate to make known my opinions concerning them, with the same fearless simplicity with which I have endeavoured to expose the errors of discontent and the artifices of faction. But for the very reason that there are great evils, the more does it behove us not to open out on a false scent.

I will conclude this essay with the examination of an article in a provincial paper of a recent date, which is now lying before me; the accidental perusal of which occasioned the whole of the preceding remarks. In order to guard against a possible mistake, I must premise, that I have not the most distant intention of defending the plan or conduct of our late expeditions, and should be grossly calumniated if I were represented as an advocate for carelessness or prodigality in the management of the public purse. The public money may or may not have been culpably wasted. I confine myself entirely to the general falsehood of the principle in the article here cited; for I am convinced, that any hopes of reform originating in such notions, must end in disappointment and public mockery.

“ONLY A FEW MILLIONS !

“We have unfortunately of late been so much accustomed to read of millions being spent in one expedition, and millions being spent in another, that a comparative insignificance is attached to an immense

sum of money, by calling it only a few millions. Perhaps some of our readers may have their judgment a little improved by making a few calculations, like those below, on the millions which it has been estimated will be lost to the nation by the late expedition to Holland; and then, perhaps, they will be led to reflect on the many millions which are annually expended in expeditions, which have almost invariably ended in absolute loss.

"In the first place, with less money than it cost the nation to take Walcheren, &c., with the view of taking or destroying the French fleet at Antwerp, consisting of nine sail of the line, we could have completely built and equipped, ready for sea, a fleet of upwards of one hundred sail of the line.

"Or, secondly, a new town could be built in every county of England, and each town consist of upwards of 1000 substantial houses for a less sum.

"Or, thirdly, it would have been enough to give 100*l.* to 2000 poor families in every county in England and Wales.

"Or, fourthly, it would be more than sufficient to give a handsome marriage portion to 200,000 young women, who probably, if they had even less than 50*l.*, would not long remain unsolicited to enter the happy state.

"Or, fifthly, a much less sum would enable the legislature to establish a life boat in every port in the United Kingdom, and provide for ten or twelve men to be kept in constant attendance on each; and 100,000*l.* could be funded, the interest of which to be applied in premiums to those who should prove to be particularly active in saving lives from wrecks, &c., and to provide for the widows and children of those men who may accidentally lose their lives in the cause of humanity.

"This interesting appropriation of ten millions sterling, may lead our readers to think of the great good that can be done by only a few millions."

The exposure of this calculation will require but a few sentences. These ten millions were expended, I presume, in arms, artillery, ammunition, clothing, provision, and the like, for about one hundred and twenty thousand British subjects: and I presume that all these consumables were produced by, and purchased from, other British subjects. Now during the building of these new towns for a thousand inhabitants each in every county, or the distribution of the hundred pound bank notes to the two thousand poor families, were the industrious ship-builders

clothiers, charcoal-burners, gunpowder-makers, gunsmiths, cutlers, cannon-founders, tailors, and shoemakers, to be left unemployed and starving;—or our brave soldiers and sailors to have remained without food and raiment? And where is the proof, that these ten millions, which, observe, all remain in the kingdom, do not circulate as beneficially in the one way as they would in the other? Which is better? To give money to the idle, houses to those who do not ask for them, and towns to counties which have already perhaps too many, or to afford opportunity to the industrious to earn their bread, and to the enterprising to better their circumstances, and perhaps to found new families of independent proprietors?—The only mode, not absolutely absurd, of considering the subject, would be, not by the calculation of the money expended, but of the labour of which the money is a symbol. But then the question would be removed altogether from the expedition: for assuredly, neither the armies were raised, nor the fleets built or manned for the sake of conquering the Isle of Walcheren, nor would a single regiment have been disbanded, nor a single sloop paid off, though the Isle of Walcheren had never existed. The whole dispute, therefore, resolves itself into this one question: whether our soldiers and sailors would not be better employed in making canals for instance, or cultivating waste lands, than in fighting or learning to fight; and the tradesman, in making grey coats instead of red or blue—and ploughshares instead of arms.—When I reflect on the state of China and the moral character of the Chinese, I dare not positively affirm that it would be better. When the fifteen millions, which form our present population, shall have attained to the same general purity of morals and shall be capable of being governed by the same admirable discipline, as the society of the Friends,

I doubt not that we should be all Quakers in this as in the other points of their moral doctrine. But were this transfer of employment desirable, is it practicable at present—is it in our power? These men know, that it is not. What then does all their reasoning amount to? Nonsense.

ESSAY VIII.

I have not intentionally either hidden or disguised the truth, like an advocate ashamed of his client, or a bribed accountant who falsifies the quotient to make the bankrupt's ledgers square with the creditor's inventory. My conscience forbids the use of falsehood and the arts of concealment : and were it otherwise, yet I am persuaded, that a system which has produced and protected so great prosperity, cannot stand in need of them. If therefore honesty and the knowledge of the whole truth be the things you aim at, you will find my principles suited to your ends : and as I like not the democratic forms, so am I not fond of any others above the rest. That a succession of wise and godly men may be secured to the nation in the highest power, is that to which I have directed your attention in this essay, which if you will read, perhaps you may see the error of those principles which have led you into errors of practice. I wrote it purposely for the use of the multitude of well-meaning people, that are tempted in these times to usurp authority and meddle with government before they have any call from duty or tolerable understanding of its principles. I never intended it for learned men versed in politics ; but for such as will be practitioners before they have been students.—*BAXTER'S Holy Commonwealth, or Political Aphorisms.*

THE metaphysical, or as I have proposed to call them, metapolitical reasonings hitherto discussed, belong to government in the abstract. But there is a second class of reasoners who argue for a change in our government from former usage, and from statutes still in force, or which have been repealed,—so these writers affirm—either through a corrupt influence, or to ward off temporary hazard or inconvenience. This class, which is rendered illustrious by the names of many intelligent and virtuous patriots, are advocates for reform in the literal sense of the word. They wish to bring back the government of *Great Britain* to a certain form, which they affirm it to

have once possessed ; and would melt the bullion anew in order to recast it in the original mould.

The answer to all arguments of this nature is obvious, and to my understanding appears decisive. These reformers assume the character of legislators or of advisers of the legislature, not that of law judges or of appellants to courts of law. Sundry statutes concerning the rights of electors, we will suppose,—still exist ; so likewise do sundry statutes on other subjects,—on witchcraft, for instance*—which change of circumstances have rendered obsolete, or increased information shewn to be absurd. It is evident, therefore, that the expediency of the regulations prescribed by them, and their suitableness to the existing circumstances of the kingdom, must first be proved ; and on this proof must be rested all rational claims for the enforcement of the statutes that have not, no less than for the re-enacting of those that have, been repealed. If the authority of the men who first enacted the laws in question, is to weigh with us, it must be on the presumption that they were wise men. But the wisdom of legislation consists in the adaptation of laws to circumstances. If then it can be proved, that the circumstances, under which those laws were enacted, no longer exist ; and that other circumstances altogether different, and in some instances opposite, have taken their place ; we have the best grounds for supposing, that if the men were now alive, they would not pass the same statutes. In other words, the spirit of the statute interpreted by the intention of the legislator would annul the letter of it. It is not indeed impossible, that by a rare felicity of accident the same law may apply to

* Repealed now ; but many other equally obsolete acts remain in the statute book, as illustrations of the principle in the text.—Ed.

two sets of circumstances. But surely the presumption is, that regulations well adapted for the manners, the social distinctions, and the state of property, of opinion, and of external relations of England in the reign of Alfred, or even in that of Edward I., will not be well suited to Great Britain at the close of the reign of George III. For instance: at the time when the greater part of the cottagers and inferior farmers were in a state of villenage, when Sussex alone contained seven thousand, and the Isle of Wight twelve hundred, families of bondsmen, it was the law of the land that every freeman should vote in the assembly of the nation personally or by his representative. An act of Parliament in the year 1660 confirmed what a concurrence of causes had previously effected:—every Englishman is now born free, the laws of the land are the birth-right of every native, and with the exception of a few honorary privileges all classes obey the same laws.* Now, argues one of our political writers, it being made the constitution of the land by our Saxon ancestors, that every freeman should have a vote, and all Englishmen being now born free, therefore, by the constitution of the land, every Englishman has now a right to a vote. How shall we reply to this without breach of that respect, to which the reasoner at least, if not the reasoning, is entitled? If it be the definition of a pun, that it is the confusion of two dif-

* The reference is to the abolition of the military tenures at the Restoration. "For at length the military tenures, with all their heavy appendages, (having during the usurpation been discontinued) were destroyed at one blow by the statute 12 Car. II. c. 24, which enacts that . . . all sorts of tenures, held of the king or others, be turned into free and common socage; save only tenures in frank-almoign, &c. A statute, which was a greater acquisition to the civil property of this kingdom than even *magna carta* itself." Blackst. *Comm.* II. c. 5.—Ed.

ferent meanings under the same or some similar sound, we might almost characterize this argument as being grounded on a grave pun. Our ancestors established the right of voting in a particular class of men, forming at that time the middle rank of society, and known to be all of them, or almost all, legal proprietors—and these were then called the freemen of England : therefore they established it in the lowest classes of society, in those who possess no property, because these two are now called by the same name ! Under a similar pretext, grounded on the same precious logic, a Mameluke Bey extorted a large contribution from the Egyptian Jews : “These books, the Pentateuch, are authentic ?” “Yes !” “Well, the debt then is acknowledged :—and now the receipt, or the money, or your heads ! The Jews borrowed a large treasure from the Egyptians ; but you are the Jews, and on you, therefore, I call for the repayment.” Besides, if a law is to be interpreted by the known intention of its makers, the Parliament in 1660, which declared all natives of England freemen, but neither altered nor meant thereby to alter the limitations of the right of election, did to all intents and purposes except that right from the common privileges of Englishmen, as Englishmen.

A moment's reflection may convince us, that every single statute is made under the knowledge of all the other laws, with which it is meant to co-exist, and by which its action is to be modified and determined. In the legislative as in the religious code the text must not be taken without the context. Now, I think, we may safely leave it to the reformers themselves to make choice between the civil and political privileges of Englishmen at present, considered as one sum total, and those of our ancestors in any former period of our history, consid

as another, on the old principle, "take one and leave the other; but whichever you take, take it all or none." Laws seldom become obsolete as long as they are both useful and practicable; but should there be an exception in any given law, there is no other way of reviving its validity but by convincing the existing legislature of its undiminished ~~practicability and expediency~~; which in all essential points is the same as the recommending of a new law. And this leads me to the third class of the advocates of reform, those, namely, who leave ancient statutes to lawyers and historians, and universal principles with the demonstrable deductions from them to the schools of logic, mathematics, theology, and ethics, rest all their measures, which they wish to see adopted, wholly on their expediency. Consequently, they must hold themselves prepared to give such proof, as the nature of comparative expediency admits, and to bring forward such evidence, as experience and the logic of probability can supply, that the plans which they recommend for adoption, are;—first, practicable; secondly, suited to the existing circumstances; and lastly, necessary or at least requisite, and such as will enable the government to accomplish more perfectly the ends for which it was instituted. These are the three indispensable conditions of all prudent change, the credentials, with which wisdom never fails to furnish her public envoys. Whoever brings forward a measure that combines this threefold excellence, whether in the cabinet, the senate, or by means of the press, merits emphatically the title of a patriotic statesman. Neither are they without a fair claim to respectful attention as state-counsellors, who fully aware of these conditions, and with a due sense of the difficulty of fulfilling them, employ their time and talents in making the attempt. An

imperfect plan is not necessarily a useless plan : and in a complex enigma the greatest ingenuity is not always shewn by him who first gives the complete solution. The dwarf sees farther than the giant, when he has the giant's shoulders to mount on.

Thus, as perspicuously as I could, I have exposed the erroneous principles of political philosophy, and pointed out the one only ground on which the constitution of governments can be either condemned or justified by wise men.

If I interpret aright the signs of the times, that branch of politics which relates to the necessity and practicality of infusing new life into our legislature, as the best means of securing talent and wisdom in the cabinet, will shortly occupy the public attention with a paramount interest. I would gladly therefore suggest the proper state of feeling and the right preparatory notions with which this disquisition should be entered upon : and I do not know how I can effect this more naturally, than by relating the facts and circumstances which influenced my own mind. I can scarcely be accused of egotism as in the communications and conversations which I am about to mention as having occurred to me during my residence abroad, I am no otherwise the hero of the tale, than as being the passive receiver or auditor.

To examine any thing wisely, two conditions are requisite : first, a distinct notion of the desirable ends, in the complete accomplishment of which would consist the perfection of such a thing, or its ideal excellence ; and, secondly, a calm and kindly mode of feeling, without which we shall hardly fail either to overlook, or not to make due allowances for, the circumstances which prevent these ends from being all perfectly realized in the particular thing which we are to examine. For instance

we must have a general notion what a man can be and ought to be, before we can fitly proceed to determine on the merits or demerits of any one individual. For the examination of our own government, I prepared my mind, therefore, by a short catechism, which I shall communicate in the next essay, and on which the letter and anecdotes that follow, will, I flatter myself, be found an amusing, if not an instructive, commentary.

ESSAY IX.

Hoc potissimum pacto felicem ac magnum regem se fore judicans ; non si quam plurimis sed si quam optimis imperet. Proinde parum esse putat justis præsiidiis regnum suum munisse, nisi idem viris eruditione juxta ac vitæ integritate præcellentibus ditet atque honestet. Nimirum intelligit hæc demum esse vera regni decora, has veras opes : hanc veram et nullis unquam æculis cessuram gloriam.—Erasmî Poncherio, Episc. Parisien. Epistola.

Judging that he will have employed the most effectual means of being a happy and powerful king, not by governing the most numerous but the most moral people. He deems it of small sufficiency to have protected the country by fleets and garrison, unless he shall at the same time enrich and illustrate it with men of eminent learning and sanctity. For these verily he conceives to be the true ornaments and wealth of his kingdom,—these its only genuine and imperishable glories.

IN what do all states agree? A number of men—exert—powers—in union. Wherein do they differ? First, in the quality and quantity of the powers. One state possesses chemists, mechanists, mechanics of all kinds, men of science; the arts of war and peace; and its citizens naturally strong and of habitual courage. Another state may possess none or a few only of these, or the same more imperfectly. Or of two states possessing the same in equal perfection the one is more populous than the other, as in the instance of France and Switzerland. Secondly, in the more or less perfect union of these powers. Compare Mr. Leckie's valuable and authentic documents respecting the state of Sicily with the preceding essay on taxation. Thirdly, in the greater or less activity of exertion. Think of the papal state and

its silent metropolis, and then of the county of Lancaster and the towns of Manchester and Liverpool. What is the condition indispensable to the exertion of powers in union by a number of men? A government. What are the ends of government? They are of two kinds, negative and positive. The negative ends of government are the protection of life, of personal freedom, of property, of reputation, and of religion, from foreign and from domestic attacks. The positive ends are;—First, to make the means of subsistence more easy to each individual:—Secondly, that in addition to the necessities of life he should derive from the union and division of labour a share of the comforts and conveniencies which humanize and ennoble his nature; and at the same time the power of perfecting himself in his own branch of industry by having those things which he needs provided for him by others among his fellow-citizens; the tools and raw or manufactured materials necessary for his own employment being included. I knew a profound mathematician in Sicily, who had devoted a full third of his life to the discovery of the longitude, and who had convinced not only himself but the principal mathematicians of Messina and Palermo that he had succeeded; but neither throughout Sicily nor Naples could he find a single artist capable of constructing the instrument which he had invented:*

* The good old man, who is poor, old, and blind, universally esteemed for the innocence and austerity of his life not less than for his learning, and yet universally neglected, except by persons almost as poor as himself, strongly reminded me of a German epigram on Kepler, which may be thus translated:—

No mortal spirit yet had clomb so high
As Kepler—yet his country saw him die
For very want ! the minds alone he fed,
And so the bodies left him without bread.

The good old man presented me with the book in which he has

Thirdly, the hope of bettering his own condition and that of his children. The civilized man gives up those stimulants of hope and fear which constitute the chief charm of the savage life: and yet his Maker has distinguished him from the brute that perishes, by making hope an instinct of his nature and an indispensable condition of his moral and intellectual progression. But a natural instinct constitutes a natural right, as far as its gratification is compatible with the equal rights of others. Hence our ancestors classed those who were bound to the soil (*adscriptitii glebæ*) and incapable by law of altering their condition from that of their parents, as bondsmen or villeins, however advantageously they might otherwise be situated. Reflect on the direful effects of castes in Hindostan, and then transfer yourself in fancy to an English cottage,—

Where o'er the cradled infant bending
Hope has fix'd her wishful gaze,—

and the fond mother dreams of her child's future fortunes.—Who knows but he may come home a rich merchant, like such a one, or be a bishop or a judge? The prizes are indeed few and rare, but still they are possible: and the hope is universal, and perhaps occasions more happiness than even its fulfilment:—Lastly, the development of those faculties which are essential to his human nature by the knowledge of his moral and religious duties, and the increase of his intellectual powers in as great a degree as is compatible with the other ends of social union, and does not involve a contradiction. The

described and demonstrated his invention: and I should with great pleasure transmit it to any mathematician who would feel an interest in examining it and communicating his opinion on its merits.

poorest Briton possesses much and important knowledge, which he would not have had, if Luther, Calvin, Newton, and their compeers had not existed; but it is evident that the means of science and learning could not exist, if all men had a right to be made profound mathematicians or men of extensive erudition. Still instruction is one of the ends of government: for it is that only which makes the abandonment of the savage state an absolute duty: and that constitution is the best, under which the average sum of useful knowledge is the greatest, and the causes that awaken and encourage talent and genius, the most powerful and various.

These were my preparatory notions. The influences under which I proceeded to re-examine our own constitution, were the following, which I give, not exactly as they occurred, but in the order in which they will be illustrative of the different articles of the preceding paragraph. That we are better and happier than others is indeed no reason for our not becoming still better; especially as with states, as well as individuals, not to be progressive is to be retrograde. Yet the comparison will usefully temper the desire of improvement with love and a sense of gratitude for what we already are.

- I. A LETTER RECEIVED, AT MALTA, FROM AN AMERICAN OFFICER OF HIGH RANK,* WHO HAS SINCE RECEIVED THE THANKS AND REWARDS OF CONGRESS FOR HIS SERVICES IN THE MEDITERRANEAN.

Grand Cairo, Dec. 13, 1804.

SIR,

THE same reason, which induced me to request letters of introduction to his Britannic Majesty's agents here, suggested the propriety of showing an English jack

* Decatur.—Ed.

at the main top-gallant mast-head, on entering the port of Alexandria on the 26th ult. The signal was recognized ; and Mr. B—— was immediately on board.

We found in port, a Turkish Vice Admiral, with a ship of the line, and six frigates ; a part of which squadron is stationed there to preserve the tranquillity of the country ; with just as much influence as the same number of pelicans would have on the same station.

On entering and passing the streets of Alexandria, I could not but notice the very marked satisfaction, which every expression and every countenance of all denominations of people, Turks and Frenchmen only excepted, manifested under an impression that we were the *avant-couriers* of an English army. They had conceived this from observing the English jack at our main, taking our flag perhaps for that of a saint, and because as is common enough everywhere, they were ready to believe what they wished. It would have been cruel to have undeceived them : consequently without positively assuming it, we passed in the character of Englishmen among the middle and lower orders of society, and as their allies among those of better information. Wherever we entered or wherever halted, we were surrounded by the wretched inhabitants ; and stunned with their benedictions and prayers for blessings on us. "Will the English come? Are they coming? God grant the English may come! we have no commerce—we have no money—we have no bread! When will the English arrive?" My answer was uniformly, Patience! The same tone was heard at Rosetta as among the Alexandrians, indicative of the same dispositions ; only it was not so loud, because the inhabitants are less miserable, although without any traits of happiness. On the fourth, we left that village for Cairo, and as well for our security as to facilitate ou

procurement of accommodations during our voyage, and our stay there, the resident directed his secretary, Capt. V——, to accompany us, and to give us lodgings in his house. We ascended the Nile leisurely, and calling at several villages, we plainly perceived that the national partiality, the strong and open expression of which proclaimed so loudly the feelings of the Egyptians of the sea coast, was general throughout the country; and the prayers for the return of the English as earnest as universal.

On the morning of the sixth we went on shore at the village of Sabour. The villagers expressed an enthusiastic gladness at seeing red and blue uniforms and round hats;—(the French, I believe, wear three-cornered ones). Two days before, five hundred Albanian deserters from the Viceroy's army had pillaged and left this village; at which they had lived at free quarters about four weeks. —The famishing inhabitants were now distressed with apprehensions from another quarter. A company of wild Arabs were encamped in sight. They dreaded their ravages and apprized us of danger from them. We were eighteen in the party, well armed; and a pretty brisk fire which we raised among the numerous flocks of pigeons and other small fowl in the environs, must have deterred them from mischief, if, as is most probable, they had meditated any against us. Scarcely, however, were we on board and under weigh, when we saw these mounted marauders of the desert fall furiously upon the herds of camels, buffaloes, and cattle of the village, and drive many of them off wholly unannoyed on the part of the unresisting inhabitants, unless their shrieks could be deemed an annoyance. They afterwards attacked and robbed several unarmed boats, which were a few hours astern of us. The most insensible must surely have been

moved by the situation of the peasants of that village. While we were listening to their complaints, they kissed our hands, and with prostrations to the ground, rendered more affecting by the inflamed state of the eyes almost universal amongst them, and which the new traveller might venially imagine to have been the immediate effect of weeping and anguish, they all implored English succour. Their shrieks at the assault of the wild Arabs seemed to implore the same still more forcibly, while it testified what multiplied reasons they had to implore it. I confess, I felt an almost insurmountable impulse to bring our little party to their relief, and might perhaps have done a rash act, had it not been for the calm and just observation of Captain V——, that “these were common occurrences, and that any relief which we could afford, would not merely be only temporary, but would exasperate the plunderers to still more atrocious outrages after our departure.”

On the morning of the seventh we landed near a village. At our approach the villagers fled : signals of friendship brought some of them to us. When they were told that we were Englishmen, they flocked around us with demonstrations of joy, offered their services, and raised loud ejaculations for our establishment in the country. Here we could not procure a pint of milk for our coffee. The inhabitants had been plundered and chased from their habitations by the Albanians and desert Arabs, and it was but the preceding day, they had returned to their naked cottages.

Grand Cairo differs from the places already passed, only as the presence of the tyrant stamps silence on the lips of misery with the seal of terror. Wretchedness here assumes the form of melancholy ; but the few whispers that are hazarded, convey the same feelings as

the same wishes. And wherein does this misery and consequent spirit of revolution consist? Not in any form of government but in a formless despotism, an anarchy indeed,—for it amounts literally to an annihilation of every thing that can merit the name of government or justify the use of the word even in the laxest sense. Egypt is under the most frightful despotism, yet has no master. The Turkish soldiery, restrained by no discipline, seize every thing by violence, not only all that their necessities dictate, but whatever their caprices suggest. The Mamelukes, who dispute with these the right of domination, procure themselves subsistence by means as lawless though less insupportably oppressive; and the wild Arabs availing themselves of the occasion, plunder the defenceless wherever they find plunder. To finish the whole, the talons of the Viceroy fix on every thing which can be changed into currency, in order to find the means of supporting an ungoverned, disorganized banditti of foreign troops, who receive the harvest of his oppression, desert and betray him. Of all this rapine, robbery, and extortion, the wretched cultivators of the soil are the perpetual victims. A spirit of revolution is the natural consequence.

The reason the inhabitants of this country give for preferring the English to the French, whether true or false, is as natural as it is simple, and as influential as natural. "The English," say they, "pay for every thing,—the French pay nothing, and take every thing." They do not like this kind of deliverers.——

Well, thought I, after the perusal of this letter, the slave trade, which had not then been abolished,—is a dreadful crime, an English iniquity, and to sanction its continuance under full conviction and parliamentary

confession of its injustice and inhumanity, is, if possible, still blacker guilt. Would that our discontents were for a while confined to our moral wants ! Whatever may be the defects of our constitution, we have at least an effective government, and that too composed of men who were born with us and are to die among us. We are at least preserved from the incursions of foreign enemies ; the intercommunion of interests precludes a civil war, and the volunteer spirit of the nation equally with its laws, gives to the darkest lanes of our crowded metropolis that quiet and security which the remotest villager at the cataracts of the Nile prays for in vain, in his mud hovel !

Not yet enslaved nor wholly vile,
O Allion, O my mother isle !
Thy vallies fair, as Eden's bowers,
Glitter green with sunny showers ;
Thy grassy uplands' gentle swells
Echo to the bleat of flocks ;—
Those grassy hills, those glitt'ring dells
Proudly ramparted with rocks,—
And ocean 'mid his uproar wild
Speaks safety to his island-child,
Hence for many a fearless age
Has social quiet loved thy shore ;
Nor ever proud invader's rage
Or sack'd thy towers or stain'd thy fields with gore.*

II. ANECDOTE OF BUONAPARTE.

BUONAPARTE, during his short stay at Malta, called out the Maltese regiments raised by the Knights, amounting to fifteen hundred of the stoutest young men of the islands. As they were drawn up on the parade, he informed them, in a bombastic harangue, that he had restored them to liberty ; but in proof that his attach-

* Ode to the Departing Year. Poetical Works, vol. 1.—Ed.

ment to them was not bounded by this benefaction, he would now give them an opportunity of adding glory to freedom—and concluded by asking who of them would march forward to be his fellow-soldiers on the banks of the Nile, and contribute a flower of Maltese heroism to the immortal wreaths of fame, with which he meant to crown the pyramids of Egypt! Not a man stirred: all gave a silent refusal. They were instantly surrounded by a regiment of French soldiers, marched to the Marino, forced on board the transports, and threatened with death if any one of them attempted his escape, or should be discovered in any part of the islands of Malta or Goza. At Alexandria they were always put in the front, both to save the French soldiery, and to prevent their running away: and of the whole number, fifty only survived to revisit their native country. From one of these survivors I first learned this fact, which was afterwards confirmed to me by several of his remaining comrades, as well as by the most respectable inhabitants of Valette.

This anecdote recalled to my mind an accidental conversation with an old countryman in a central district of Germany. I purposely omit names because the day of retribution has come and gone by.* I was looking at a strong fortress in the distance, which formed a highly interesting object in a rich and varied landscape, and asked the old man, who had stopped to gaze at me, its name, adding—How beautiful it looks! “It may be

* This anecdote refers to the transfer made by the Landgrave of Hesse-Cassel of a body of his troops to the service of Great Britain in the first American war:

—and leagued with these

Each petty German princeling, nur’d in gore;

Soul-harden’d barterers of human blood—

Death’s prime slave-merchants—scorpion whips of fate!

Poetical Works, vol. i.—Ed.

well enough to look at," answered he, "but God keep all Christians from being taken thither!" He then proceeded to gratify the curiosity which he had thus excited, by informing me that the Baron ——— had been taken out of his bed at midnight and carried to that fortress—that he was not heard of for nearly two years, when a soldier who had fled over the boundaries sent information to his family of the place and mode of his imprisonment. As I have no design to work on the feelings of my readers, I pass over the shocking detail: had not the language and countenance of my informant precluded such a suspicion, I might have supposed that he had been repeating some tale of horror from a romance of the dark ages. "What was his crime?" I asked.—"The report is," said the old man, "that in his capacity as minister he had remonstrated with the ——— concerning the extravagance of his mistress, an outlandish countess; and that she in revenge persuaded the sovereign, that it was the Baron who had communicated to a professor at Göttingen the particulars of the infamous sale of some thousand of his subjects as soldiers." On the same day I discovered in the landlord of a small public house one of the men who had been thus sold. He seemed highly delighted in entertaining an English gentleman, and in once more talking English after a lapse of so many years. He was far from regretting this incident in his life, but his account of the manner in which they were forced away accorded in so many particulars with Schiller's impassioned description of the same or a similar scene, in his tragedy of Cabal and Love, as to leave a perfect conviction on my mind, that the dramatic pathos of that description was not greater than its historic fidelity.

As I was thus reflecting, I glanced my eye on the leading paragraph of a London newspaper, containing

much angry declamation, and some bitter truths, respecting our military arrangements. It were in vain, thought I, to deny that the influence of parliamentary interest, which prevents the immense patronage of the crown from becoming a despotic power, is not the most likely to secure the ablest commanders or the fittest persons for the management of our foreign empire. However, thank God! if we fight, we fight for our own king and country: and grievances which may be publicly complained of, there is some chance of seeing remedied.

III. A celebrated professor in a German university, shewed me a very pleasing print, entitled, Toleration.—A Roman Catholic priest, a Lutheran divine, a Calvinist minister, a Quaker, a Jew, and a philosopher, were represented sitting round the same table, over which a winged figure hovered in the attitude of protection. “For this harmless print,” said my friend, “the artist was imprisoned, and having attempted to escape, was sentenced to draw the boats on the banks of the Danube, with robbers and murderers: and there died in less than two months, from exhaustion and exposure. In your happy country, sir, this print would be considered as a pleasing scene from real life: for in every great town throughout your empire you may meet with the original.” “Yes,” I replied, “as far as the negative ends of government are concerned, we have no reason to complain. Our government protects us from foreign enemies, and our laws secure our lives, our personal freedom, our property, reputation, and religious rights, from domestic attacks. Our taxes, indeed, are enormous”—“Oh! talk not of taxes,” said my friend, “till you have resided in a country where the boor disposes of his produce to strangers for a foreign mart, not to bring back to his family the comforts and conveniences of foreign manufactures, but

to procure that coin which his lord is to squander away in a distant land. Neither can I with patience hear it said, that your laws act only to the negative ends of government. They have a manifold positive influence, and their incorrupt administration gives a colour to all your modes of thinking, and is one of the chief causes of your superior morality in private as well as public life."*

My limits compel me to strike out the different incidents which I had written as a commentary on the former three of the positive ends of government. To the moral feelings of my readers they might have been serviceable ; but for their understandings they are superfluous. It is surely impossible to peruse those ends, and not admit that all three are realized under our government to a degree unexampled in any other old and long peopled country. The defects of our constitution, in which word I include the laws and customs of the land as well as its scheme of legislative and executive power, must exist, therefore, in the fourth, namely, the production of the highest average of general information, of general moral and religious principles, and the excite-

* "The administration of justice throughout the continent is partial, venal, and infamous. I have, in conversation with many sensible men, met with something of content with their governments in all other respects than this ; but upon the question of expecting justice to be really and fairly administered, every one confessed there was no such thing to be looked for. The conduct of the judges is profligate and atrocious. Upon almost every cause that comes before them interest is openly made with the judges ; and woe betide the man, who, with a cause to support has no means of conciliating favour, either by the beauty of a handsome wife, or by other methods."—This quotation is confined in the original to France under the monarchy ; I have extended the application, and adopted the words as comprising the result of my own experience : and I take this opportunity of declaring, that the most important parts of Mr. Leckie's statement concerning Sicily, I myself know to be accurate, and am authorized by what I myself saw there, to rely on the whole as a fair and unexaggerated representation

ments and opportunities which it affords to paramount genius and heroic power in a sufficient number of its citizens. These are points in which it would be immorality to rest content with the presumption, however well founded, that we are better than others, if we are not what we ought to be ourselves, and are not using the means of improvement. The first question then is, What is the fact? The second upon the supposition of a defect or deficiency in one or all of these points, and that to a degree which may affect our power and prosperity, if not our absolute safety,—Are the plans of legislative reform that have hitherto been proposed fit or likely to remove such defect, and supply such deficiency? The third and last question is,—Should there appear reason to deny or doubt this, are there any other means, and what are they?—Of these points in the concluding essay of this section.

A French gentleman in the reign of Louis XIV. was comparing the French and English writers with all the boastfulness of national prepossession. "Sir!" replied an Englishman better versed in the principles of freedom than the canons of criticism, "there are but two subjects worthy the human intellect, politics and religion, our state here and our state hereafter; and on neither of these dare you write." Long may the envied privilege be preserved to my countrymen of writing and talking concerning both! Nevertheless, it behoves us all to consider that to write or talk concerning any subject, without having previously taken the pains to understand it, is a breach of duty which we owe to ourselves, though it may be no offence against the laws of the land. The privilege of talking and even publishing nonsense is necessary in a free state; but the more sparingly we make use of it the better.

ESSAY X.

Then we may thank ourselves,
Who spell-bound by the magic name of peace
Dream golden dreams. Go, warlike Britain, go,
For the grey olive-branch change thy green laurels :
Hang up thy rusty helmet, that the bee
May have a hive, or spider find a loom !
Instead of doubling drum and thrilling fife
Be lull'd in lady's lap with amorous flutes.
But for Napoleon, know, he'll scorn this calm :
The ruddy planet at his birth bore away ;
Sanguine, adust, his humour, and wild fire
His ruling element. Rage, revenge, and cunning
Make up the temper of this captain's valour.

LITTLE prospective wisdom can that man obtain, who hurrying onward with the current, or rather torrent, of events, feels no interest in their importance, except as far as his curiosity is excited by their novelty ; and to whom all reflection and retrospect are wearisome. If ever there were a time when the formation of just public principles becomes a duty of private morality ; when the principles of morality in general ought to be made to bear on our public suffrages, and to affect every great national determination ; when, in short, his country should have a place by every Englishman's fire-side ; and when the feelings and truths which give dignity to the fireside and tranquillity to the death-bed, ought to be present and influential in the cabinet and in the senate—that time is now with us. As an introduction to, and at the same time as a commentary on, the subject of international

law, I have taken a review of the circumstances that led to the treaty of Amiens, and the recommencement of the war, more especially with regard to the occupation of Malta.

In a rich commercial state, a war seldom fails to become unpopular by length of continuance. The first, or revolution war, which towards its close, had become just and necessary, perhaps beyond any former example, had yet causes of unpopularity peculiar to itself. Exhaustion is the natural consequence of excessive stimulation, in the feelings of nations equally as in those of individuals. Wearied out by overwhelming novelties; stunned, as it were, by a series of strange explosions; sick too of hope long delayed; and uncertain as to the real object and motive of the war, from the rapid change and general failure of its ostensible objects and motives; the public mind for many months preceding the signing of the preliminaries had lost all its tone and elasticity. The consciousness of mutual errors and mutual disappointments disposed the great majority of all parties to a spirit of diffidence and toleration, which, amiable as it may be in individuals, in a nation, and above all in an opulent and luxurious nation, is always too nearly akin to apathy and selfish indulgence. An unmanly impatience for peace became only not universal. After as long a resistance as the nature of our constitution and national character permitted or even endured, the government applied at length the only remedy adequate to the greatness of the evil, a remedy which the magnitude of the evil justified, and which nothing but an evil of that magnitude could justify. At a high price they purchased for us the name of peace, at a time when the views of France became daily more and more incompatible with our vital interest. Considering the peace as a mere truce of experiment, wise and temperate

men regarded with complacency the treaty of Amiens, for the very reasons that would have insured the condemnation of any other treaty under any other circumstances. Its palpable deficiencies were its antidote ; or rather they formed its very essence, and declared at first sight, what alone it was, or was meant to be. Any attempt at that time and in this treaty to have secured Italy, Holland, and the German empire, would have been, in the literal sense of the word, preposterous. The nation would have withdrawn all faith in the pacific intentions of the ministers, if the negotiation had been broken off on a plea of this kind : for it had taken for granted the extreme desirableness, nay, the necessity of a peace, and, this once admitted, there would, no doubt, have been an absurdity in continuing the war for objects which the war furnished no means of realizing. If the First Consul had entered into stipulations with us respecting the continent, they would have been observed only as long as his interest from other causes might have dictated ;— they would have been signed with as much sincerity and observed with as much good faith as the article actually inserted in the treaty of Amiens, respecting the integrity of the Turkish empire. This article indeed was wisely insisted on by us, because it affected both our national honour, and the interest of our Indian empire immediately ; and still more, perhaps, because this of all others was the most likely to furnish an early proof of the First Consul's real dispositions. But deeply interested in the fate of the continent, as we are thought to be, it would nevertheless have been most idle to have abandoned a peace, upon the supposition of its being at all desirable, on the ground that the French government had refused that which would have been of no value had it been granted.

Indeed there results one serious disadvantage from insisting on the rights and interests of Austria, the Empire, Switzerland, &c., in a treaty between England and France, and, as it should seem, no advantage to counterbalance it. For so, any attack on those rights instantly pledges our character and national dignity to commence a war, however inexpedient it may happen to be, and however hopeless: while if a war be expedient, any attack on these countries by France furnishes a justifiable cause of war in its essential nature, and independently of all positive treaty. Seen in this light, the defects of the treaty of Amiens become its real merits. If the government of France made peace in the spirit of peace, then a friendly intercourse and the humanizing influences of commerce and reciprocal hospitality would gradually bring about in both countries the dispositions necessary for the calm discussion and sincere conclusion of a genuine, efficient, and comprehensive treaty. If the contrary proved the fact, the treaty of Amiens contained in itself the principles of its own dissolution. It was what it ought to be. If the First Consul had both meant and dealt fairly by us, the treaty would have led to a true settlement: but he acting as all prudent men expected that he would act, it supplied just reasons for the commencement of war, and at its decease left us, as a legacy, blessings that assuredly far outweighed our losses by the peace. It left us popular enthusiasm, national unanimity, and simplicity of object; and removed one inconvenience which cleaved to the last war, by attaching to the right objects, and enlisting under their proper banners, the scorn and hatred of slavery, the passion for freedom, all the high thoughts and high feelings that connect us with the honoured names of past ages; and inspire sentiments and language,

to which our Hamplens, Sidneys, and Russels, might listen without jealousy.

The late peace then was negotiated by the government, ratified by the legislature, and received by the nation, as an experiment,—as the only means of exhibiting such proof as would be satisfactory to the people in their then temper: whether Buonaparte devoting his ambition and activity to the re-establishment of trade, colonial tranquillity, and social morals, in France, would abstain from insulting, alarming and endangering the British empire. And these thanks at least were due to the First Consul, that he did not long delay the proof. With more than papal insolence he issued edicts of anathema against us, and excommunicated us from all interference in the affairs of the continent. He insulted us still more indecently by pertinacious demands respecting our constitutional laws and rights of hospitality; by the official publication of Sebastiani's report; and by a direct personal outrage offered in the presence of all the foreign ministers to the king of England, in the person of his ambassador. He both insulted and alarmed us by a display of the most perfidious ambition in the subversion of the independence of Switzerland, in the avowal of designs against Egypt, Syria, and the Greek islands, and in the mission of military spies to Great Britain itself. And by forcibly maintaining a French army in Holland, he at once insulted, alarmed, and endangered us. What can render a war just—its expedience being pre-supposed—if insult, repeated alarm, and danger do not? And how can it be expedient for a rich, united, and powerful island-empire to remain in nominal peace and unresenting passiveness with an insolent neighbour, who has proved that to wage against it as

unmitigated war of insult, alarm, and endangerment is both his temper and his system ?

Many attempts were made by Mr. Fox to explain away the force of the greater number of the facts here enumerated : but the great fact, for which alone they have either force or meaning, the great ultimate fact, that Great Britain had been insulted, alarmed, and endangered by France, Mr. Fox himself expressly admitted. The opposers, however, of the present war concentrate the strength of their cause in the following brief argument. Although we grant, say they, the grievances set forth in our manifesto to be as notorious as they are asserted to be, yet more notorious they cannot be than that other fact which utterly annuls them as reasons for a war,—the fact, that ministers themselves regard them only as the pompous garnish of the dish. It stands on record, that Buonaparte might have purchased our silence for ever, respecting these insults and injuries, by a mere acquiescence on his part in our retention of Malta. The whole treaty of Amiens is little more than a perplexed bond of compromise respecting Malta. On Malta we rested the peace : for Malta we renewed the war. So say the opposers of the present war. As its advocate I do not deny the fact as stated by them ; but I hope to achieve all, and more than all, the purposes of such denial, by an explanation of the fact. The difficulty then resolves itself into two questions : First, in what sense of the words can we be said to have gone to war for Malta alone ? Secondly, wherein does the importance of Malta consist ? The answer to the second will be found in the notice of the life of Sir Alexander Ball, the liberator and political father of the Maltese, contained in a subsequent part of *this work* : * while the attempt to settle the first question,

so as at the same time to elucidate the law of nations and its identity with the law of conscience, will occupy the remainder of the present essay.

I. IN WHAT SENSE CAN WE BE AFFIRMED TO HAVE
RENEWED THE WAR FOR MALTA ALONE?

IF we had known or could reasonably have believed, that the views of France were and would continue to be friendly or negative toward Great Britain, neither the subversion of the independence of Switzerland, nor the maintenance of a French army in Holland, would have furnished any prudent ground for war. For the only way by which we could have injured France, namely, the destruction of her commerce and navy, would increase her means of continental conquests, by concentrating all the resources and energies of the French empire in her military powers: while the losses and miseries which the French people would suffer in consequence, and their magnitude, compared with any advantages that might accrue to them from the extension of the name, France, were facts which, we knew by experience, would weigh as nothing with the existing government. Its attacks on the independence of its continental neighbours became motives to us for the recommencement of hostility, only as far as they gave proofs of a hostile intention toward ourselves, and facilitated the realizing of such intention. If any events had taken place, increasing the means of injuring this country, even though these events furnished no moral ground of complaint against France, (such for instance, might be the great extension of her population and revenue, from freedom and a wise government) much more, if they were the fruits of iniquitous ambition, and therefore in themselves involved the probability of a hostile intention to us—then, I say, every after occur-

rence would become important, and both a just and expedient ground of war, in proportion, not to the importance of the thing in itself, but to the quantity of evident proof afforded by it of a hostile design in the government, by whose power our interests are endangered. If by demanding the immediate evacuation of Malta, when he had himself destroyed the security of its actual independence—on his promise of preserving which our pacific promises rested as on their sole foundation—and this too, after he had openly avowed such designs on Egypt, as not only in the opinion of our ministers, but in his own opinion, made it of the greatest importance to this country, that Malta should not be under French influence;—if by this conduct the First Consul exhibited a decisive proof of his intention to violate our rights and to undermine our national interests; then all his preceding actions on the continent became proofs likewise of the same intention; and any one* of these aggressions in-

* A hundred cases might be imagined which would place this assertion in its true light. Suppose, for instance, a country, according to the laws of which a parent might not disinherit a son without having first convicted him of some one of sundry crimes enumerated in a specific statute. Caius, by a series of vicious actions, has so nearly convinced his father of his utter worthlessness, that the father resolves, on the next provocation, to use the very first opportunity of legally disinheriting this son. The provocation occurs, and in itself furnishes this opportunity, and Caius is disinherited, though for an action much less glaring and intolerable than most of his preceding delinquencies had been. The advocates of Caius complain that he should be thus punished for a comparative trifle, so many worse misdemeanours having been passed over. The father replies: "This, his last action, is not the cause of the disinheritance; but the means of disinheriting him. I punished him by it rather than for it. In truth, it was not for any of his actions that I have thus punished him, but for his vices; that is, not so much for the injuries which I have suffered, as for the dispositions which these actions evinced: for the insolent and alarming intentions of which they are proofs. Now of this habitual temper, of these dangerous purposes, his last action is as true and complete a manifestation as any or all of his preceding offences; and it therefore may and must be taken as their common representative."

volved the meaning of the whole. Which of them was to determine us to war would be decided by other and prudential considerations. Had the First Consul acquiesced in our detention of Malta, he would thereby have furnished such proof of pacific intentions, as would have led to further hopes, would have lessened our alarm from his former acts of ambition, and relatively to us have altered in some degree their nature.

It should never be forgotten, that a parliament or national council is essentially different from a court of justice, alike in its objects and its duties. In the latter, the juror lays aside his private knowledge and his private connections, and judges exclusively according to the evidence adduced in the court: in the former, the senator acts upon his own internal convictions, and oftentimes upon private information, which it would be imprudent or criminal to disclose. Though his ostensible reason ought to be a true and just one, it is by no means necessary that it should be his sole or even his chief reason. In a court of justice, the juror attends to the character and general intentions of the accused party, exclusively, as adding to the probability of his having or not having committed the one particular action then in question. The senator, on the contrary, when he is to determine on the conduct of a foreign power, attends to particular actions, chiefly in proof of character and existing intentions. Now there were many and very powerful reasons why, though appealing to the former actions of Buonaparte, as confirmations of his hostile spirit and alarming ambition, we should nevertheless make Malta the direct object and final determinant of the war. Had we gone to war avowedly for the independence of Holland and Switzerland, we should have furnished Buonaparte with a colourable pretext for annexing both.

countries immediately to the French empire,* which, if he should do (as if his power continued he most assuredly would sooner or later) by a mere act of violence, and undisguised tyranny, there would follow a moral weakening of his power in the minds of men, which might prove of incalculable advantage to the independence and well-being of Europe; but which, unfortunately, for this very reason, that it is not to be calculated, is too often disregarded by ordinary statesmen. At all events, it would have been made the plea for banishing, plundering, and perhaps murdering, numbers of virtuous and patriotic individuals, as being the partizans of the enemy of the continent. Add to this, that we should have appeared to have rushed into a war for objects which by war we could not hope to realize; we should have exacerbated the misfortunes of the countries of which we had elected ourselves the champions; and the war would have appeared a mere war of revenge and reprisal, a circumstance always to be avoided where it is possible. The ablest and best men in the Batavian republic, those who felt the insults of France most acutely, and were suffering from her oppressions the most severely, entreated our government, through their minister, not to make the state of Holland the great ostensible reason of the war. The Swiss patriots, too, believed that we could do nothing to assist them at that time, and attributed to our forbearance the comparatively timid use which France has made hitherto of her absolute power over that country. Besides, Austria, whom the changes on the continent much more nearly concerned than England, having refused all co-operation with us, there is reason to fear that

* The greater part of this essay was written in the year 1804, in Malta, at the request of Sir Alexander Ball.

an opinion, destructive of the one great blessing purchased by the peace, our national unanimity, would have taken deep root in the popular mind, namely, that these changes were mere pretexts. Neither should we forget, that the last war had left a dislike in our countrymen to continental interference, and a not unpalatable persuasion, that where a nation has not sufficient sensibility as to its wrongs to commence a war against the aggressor, unbribed and ungoaded by Great Britain, a war begun by the government of such a nation, at the instance of our government, has little chance of other than a disastrous result, the character and revolutionary resources of the enemy considered. Whatever may be the strength or weakness of this argument, it is however certain, that there was a strong predilection in the British people for a cause indisputably and peculiarly British. And this feeling is not altogether ungrounded. In practical politics and the great expenditures of national power, we must not pretend to be too far-sighted: otherwise even a transient peace would be impossible among the European nations. To future and distant evils we may always oppose the various unforeseen events that are ripening in the womb of the future. Lastly, it is chiefly to immediate and unequivocal attacks on our own interests and honour, that we attach the notion of right with a full and efficient feeling. Now, though we may be first stimulated to action by probabilities and prospects of advantage, and though there is a perverse restlessness in human nature, which renders almost all wars popular at their commencement, yet a nation always needs a sense of positive right to steady its spirit. There is always needed some one reason, short, simple, and independent of complicated calculation, in order to give a sort of muscular strength to the public mind, when the power that results from

enthusiasm, animal spirits, and the charm of novelty shall have evaporated.

There is no feeling more honourable to our nature, and few that strike deeper root when our nature is happily circumstanced, than the jealousy concerning a positive right, independent of an immediate interest. To surrender, in our national character, the merest trifle that is strictly our right, the merest rock on which the waves will scarcely permit the sea-fowl to lay its eggs, at the demand of an insolent and powerful rival, on a shop-keeper's calculation of loss and gain, is in its final, and assuredly not very distant, consequences, a loss of every thing—of national spirit, of national independence, and with these, of the very wealth for which the low calculation was made. This feeling in individuals, indeed, and in private life, is to be sacrificed to religion. Say rather, that by religion, it is transmuted into a higher virtue, growing on a higher and engrafted branch, yet nourished from the same root; that it remains in its essence the same spirit, but

Made pure by thought, and naturalized in heaven ;

and he who cannot perceive the moral differences of national and individual duties, comprehends neither the one nor the other, and is not a whit the better Christian for being a bad patriot. Considered nationally, it is as if the captain of a man of war should strike and surrender his colours under the pretence, that it would be folly to risk the lives of so many good Christian sailors for the sake of a few yards of coarse canvass! Of such reasoners I take an indignant leave in the words of an obscure poet:—

Fear never wanted arguments : you do
Reason yourselves into a careful bondage,

Circumspect only to your misery.
 I could urge freedom, charters, country, laws,
 Gods, and religion, and such precious names—
 Nay, what you value higher, wealth ! But that
 You sue for bondage, yielding to demands
 As impious as they're insolent, and have
 Only this sluggish aim,—to perish full !” *

And here it is necessary to animadvert on a principle asserted by Lord Minto, (in his speech, June 6th, 1803, and afterwards published at full length) that France had an undoubted right to insist on our abandonment of Malta, a right not given, but likewise not abrogated, by the treaty of Amiens. Surely in this effort of candour, his Lordship must have forgotten the circumstances on which he exerted it. The case is simply thus: the British government was convinced, and the French government admitted the justice of the conviction, that it was of the utmost importance to our interests, that Malta should remain uninfluenced by France. The French government bound itself down by a solemn treaty, that it would use its best endeavours, in conjunction with us, to secure this independence. This promise was no act of liberality, no generous free-gift, on the part of France—No ! we purchased it at a high price. We disbanded our forces, we dismissed our sailors, and we gave up the best part of the fruits of our naval victories. Can it therefore with a shadow of plausibility be affirmed, that the right to insist on our evacuation of the island was unaltered by the treaty of Amiens, when this demand was strictly tantamount to our surrender of all the advantages which we had bought of France at so high a price,—tantamount to a direct breach on her part, not merely of a solemn treaty, but of an absolute bargain ?

* Cartwright. *The Siege, or Love's Convert.* Act I. sc. 1.—Ed.



...her to re
bound ourselves to st
—not surely to Jose
known order, clothed
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We found no such orde
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execrable pun of Earl Go
(a kiss) from the archbisi
archbishop's manor

After the conduct of France in the affair of the guarantees, and of the revenues of the order, we had the same right to preserve the island independent of France by a British garrison, as a lawful creditor has to the household goods of a fugitive and dishonest debtor.

One other assertion made by Lord Minto, in the same speech, bears so immediately on the plan of *The Friend*, as far as it proposed to investigate the principle of international, no less than of private, morality, that I feel myself in some degree under an obligation to notice it. A treaty, says his Lordship, ought to be strictly observed by a nation in its literal sense, even though the utter ruin of that nation should be the certain and fore-known consequence of that observance. Previously to any remarks of my own on this high flight of diplomatic virtue, we will hear what Harrington has said on this subject. "A man may devote himself to death or destruction to save a nation; but no nation will devote itself to death or destruction to save mankind. Machiavel is decried for saying, 'that no consideration is to be had of what is just or unjust, of what is merciful or cruel, of what is honourable or ignominious, in case it be to save a state or to preserve liberty:' which as to the manner of expression may perhaps be crudely spoken. But to imagine that a nation will devote itself to death or destruction any more after faith given, or an engagement thereto tending, than if there had been no engagement made or faith given, were not piety but folly."—Crudely spoken indeed, and not less crudely thought; nor is the matter much mended by the commentator. Yet every man, who is at all acquainted with the world and its past history, knows that the fact itself is truly stated: and what is more important in the present argument, he cannot find in his heart a full, deep, and

downright verdict, that it should be otherwise. The consequences of this perplexity in the moral feelings are not seldom extensively injurious. For men hearing the duties which would be binding on two individuals living under the same laws insisted on as equally obligatory on two independent states, in extreme cases, where they see clearly the impracticability of realizing such a notion,—and having at the same time a dim half-consciousness, that two states can never be placed exactly on the same ground as two individuals,—relieve themselves from their perplexity by cutting what they cannot untie, and assert that national policy cannot in all cases be subordinated to the laws of morality;—in other words, that a government may act with injustice, and yet remain blameless. This assertion was hazarded,—I record it with unfeigned regret—by a minister of state, on the affair of Copenhagen. Tremendous assertion! that would render every complaint, which we make, of the abominations of the French tyrant, hypocrisy, or mere incendiary declamation for the simple-headed multitude. But, thank God! it is as unnecessary and unfounded, as it is tremendous. For what is a treaty? A voluntary contract between two nations. So we will state it in the first instance. Now it is an impossible case, that any nation can be supposed by any other to have intended its own absolute destruction in a treaty, which its interests alone could have prompted it to make. The very thought is self-contradictory. Not only Athens (we will say) could not have intended this to have been understood in any specific promise made to Sparta; but Sparta could never have imagined that Athens had so intended it. And Athens itself must have known, that had she even affirmed the contrary, Sparta could not have believed—nay, would have been under a moral obligation not to have believed,

her. Were it possible to suppose such a case—for instance, such a treaty made by a single besieged town, under an independent government as that of Numantia—it becomes no longer a state, but the act of a certain number of individuals voluntarily sacrificing themselves, each to preserve his separate honour. For the state was already destroyed by the circumstances which alone could make such an engagement conceivable.—But we have said, nations.—Applied to England and France, relatively to treaties, this is but a form of speaking. The treaty is really made by some half dozen, or perhaps half a hundred individuals, possessing the government of these countries. Now it is a universally admitted part of the law of nations, that an engagement entered into by a minister with a foreign power, when it is known to this power that the minister in so doing has exceeded and contravened his instructions, is altogether nugatory. And is it to be supposed for a moment, that a whole nation, consisting perhaps of twenty millions of human souls, could ever have invested a few individuals, whom altogether for the promotion of its welfare it had intrusted with its government, with the right of signing away its existence? *

* See Paley's *Moral and Political Philosophy*, B. vi. c. 12.—*Ed.*

ESSAY XI.

*Amicas reprehensiones gratissime accipiamus oportet; etiam si reprehendi non meruit opinio nostra, vel hanc propter causam, quod recte defendi potest. Si vero infirmitas vel humana vel propria, etiam cum veraciter arguitur, non potest non aliquantulum contristari, melius tumor dolet dum curatur, quam dum parcat et non sanatur. Hoc enim est quod acute vidit, qui ait; utiliores esse plerumque inimicos obviantes, quam amicos obviare metuentes. Illi enim dum rixantur, dicunt aliquando vera quae corrigamus; isti autem minorem, quam oportet, exhibent justitiae libertatem, dum amiciciae timent exasperare dulcedinem.—AUGUSTIN. HIERONYMO.**

Censures, offered in friendliness, we ought to receive with gratitude: yea, though our opinions did not merit censure, we should still be thankful for the attack on them, were it only that it gives us an opportunity of successfully defending the same. For never doth an important truth spread its roots so wide, or clasp the soil so stubbornly, as when it has braved the winds of controversy. There is a stirring and a far-heard music sent forth from the tree of sound knowledge, when its branches are fighting with the storm, which passing onward shrills out at once truth's triumph and its own defeat. But if the infirmity of human nature, or of our own constitutional temperament, cannot, even when we have been fairly convicted of error, but suffer some small mortification, yet better suffer pain from its extirpation, than from the consequences of its continuance, and of the false tenderness that has withholden the remedy. This is what the acute observer had in his mind, who said, that upbraiding enemies were not seldom more profitable than friends afraid to find fault. For the former amidst their quarrelsome invectives may chance on some home truths, by which we may amend ourselves in consequence; while the latter from an over

* August. Op. Tom. ii. Epist. xv. Ed. Basil. The original of the former part of the quotation, which is a good deal altered, stands thus:—*Ut et ego amicissimum reprehensionem gratissime accipiam, etiam si reprehendi non meruit quod recte defendi potest. * * * Si vero infirmitas vel humana mea, etiam cum veraciter arguor, non potest non aliquantulum contristari, melius capitis tumor dolet, &c.*—Ed.

delicate apprehension of ruffling the smooth surface of friendship shrink from its duties, and from the manly freedom which truth and justice demand.

ONLY a few privileged individuals are authorized to pass into the theatre without stopping at the door-keeper's box; but every man of decent appearance may put down the play-price there, and thenceforward has as good a right as the managers themselves not only to see and hear, as far as his place in the house, and his own ears and eyes permit him, but likewise to express audibly his approbation or disapprobation of what may be going forward on the stage. If his feelings happen to be in unison with those of the audience in general, he may without breach of decorum persevere in his notices of applause or dislike, till the wish of the house is complied with. If he finds himself unsupported, he rests contented with having once exerted his common right, and on that occasion at least gives no further interruption to the amusement of those who feel differently from him. So it is, or so it should be, in literature. A few extraordinary minds may be allowed to pass a mere opinion;—though in point of fact those, who alone are entitled to this privilege, are ever the last to avail themselves of it. Add, too, that even the mere opinions of such men may in general be regarded either as promissory notes, or as receipts referring to a former payment. But every man's opinion has a right to pass into the common auditory, if his reason for the opinion is paid down at the same time: for arguments are the sole current coin of intellect. The degree of influence to which the opinion is entitled should be proportioned to the weight and value of the reasons for it; and whether these are shillings or pounds sterling, the man who has given them remains blameless, provided he contents himself

with the place to which they have entitled him, and does not attempt by strength of lungs to counterbalance its disadvantages, or expect to exert as immediate an influence in the back seats of the upper gallery, as if he had paid in gold and been seated in the stage box.

But unfortunately,—and here commence the points of difference between the theatric and the literary public,—in the great theatre of literature there are no authorized door-keepers: for our anonymous critics are self-elected. I shall not fear the charge of calumny if I add that they have lost all credit with wise men by unfair dealing: such as their refusal to receive an honest man's money, that is, his argument, because they anticipate and dislike his opinion, while others of suspicious character and the most unseemly appearance are suffered to pass without payment, or by virtue of orders which they have themselves distributed to known partizans. Sometimes the honest man's intellectual coin is refused under pretence that it is light or counterfeit, without any proof given either by the money scales, or by sounding the coin in dispute together with one of known goodness. We may carry the metaphor still farther. It is by no means a rare case, that the money is returned because it had a different sound from that of a counterfeit, the brassy blotches on which seemed to blush for the impudence of the silver wash in which they were insided, and rendered the mock coin a lively emblem of a lie self-detected. Still oftener does the rejection take place by a mere act of insolence, and the blank assertion that the candidate's money is light or bad, is justified by a second assertion that he is a fool or knave for offering it.

The second point of difference explains the preceding, and accounts both for the want of established door-keepers in the auditory of literature, and for the practices

of those, who under the name of reviewers volunteer this office. There is no royal mintage for arguments, no ready means by which all men alike, who possess common sense, may determine their value and intrinsic worth at the first sight or sound. Certain forms of natural logic indeed there are, the inobservance of which is decisive against an argument; but the strictest adherence to them is no proof of its actual, though an indispensable condition of its possible, validity. In the arguer's own conscience there is, no doubt, a certain value, and an infallible criterion of it, which applies to all arguments equally; and this is the sincere conviction of the mind itself. But for those to whom it is offered, there are only conjectural marks; yet such as will seldom mislead any man of plain sense, who is both honest and observant. These characteristics I have attempted to comprise in a previous part of this work, and to describe them more at large in the essays that follow, on the communication of truth. If the honest warmth, which results from the strength of the particular conviction, be tempered by the modesty which belongs to the sense of general fallibility; if the emotions, which accompany all vivid perceptions, are preserved distinct from the expression of personal passions, and from appeals to them in the heart of others; if the reasoner asks no respect for the opinion, as his opinion, but only in proportion as it is acknowledged by that reason, which is common to all men; and, lastly, if he supports an opinion on no subject which he has not previously examined, and furnishes proof both that he possesses the means of inquiry by his education or the nature of his pursuits, and that he has endeavoured to avail himself of those means; then, and with these conditions, every human being is authorized to make public the grounds of any opinion which he

holds, and of course the opinion itself, as the object of them. Consequently, it is the duty of all men, not always indeed to attend to him, but, if they do, to attend to him with respect, and with a sincere as well as apparent toleration. I should offend against my own laws, if I disclosed at present the nature of my convictions concerning the degree, in which this virtue of toleration is possessed and practised by the majority of my contemporaries and countrymen. But if the contrary temper is felt and shown in instances where all those conditions have been observed, which have been stated at full in the preliminary essays that form the introduction to this work, and the chief of which I have just now recapitulated : I have no hesitation in declaring that whatever the opinion may be, and however opposite to the hearer's or reader's previous persuasions, one or other of all of the following defects must be taken for granted. Either the intolerant person is not master of the grounds on which his own faith is built ; which therefore neither is nor can be his own faith, though it may very easily be his imagined interest, and his habit of thought. In this case he is angry, not at the opposition to truth, but at the interruption of his own indolence and intellectual slumber, or possibly at the apprehension, that his temporal advantages are threatened, or at least the ease of mind, in which he had been accustomed to enjoy them. Or, secondly, he has no love of truth for its own sake ; no reverence for the divine command to seek earnestly after it, which command, if it had not been so often and solemnly given by revelation, is yet involved and expressed in the gift of reason, and in the dependence of all our virtues on its development. He has no moral and religious awe for freedom of thought, though accompanied both by sincerity and humility ; nor for the right

of free communication which is ordained by God together with that freedom, if it be true that God has ordained us to live in society, and has made the progressive improvement of all and each of us to depend on the reciprocal aids, which directly or indirectly each supplies to all, and all to each. But if his alarm and his consequent intolerance, are occasioned by his eternal rather than temporal interests, and if, as is most commonly the case, he does not deceive himself on this point, gloomy indeed, and erroneous beyond idolatry, must have been his notions of the Supreme Being! For surely the poor heathen who represents to himself the divine attributes of wisdom, justice, and mercy, under multiplied and forbidden symbols in the powers of nature or the souls of extraordinary men, practises a superstition which (though at once the cause and effect of blindness and sensuality) is less incompatible with inward piety and true religious feeling than the creed of that man, who in the spirit of the practice, though not in direct words, loses sight of all these attributes, and substitutes 'instead of the adoptive and cheerful boldness, which our new alliance with God requires,' a 'servile and thrall-like fear.'* Such fear-ridden and thence angry believers, or rather acquiescents, would do well to re-peruse the book of Job, and

* *Milton, Of Reformation in England*, B. i. *sub initio*. "For in very deed, the superstitious man by his good will is an atheist; but being scared from thence by the pangs and gripes of a boiling conscience, all in a pudder shuffles up to himself such a God and such a worship as is most agreeable to remedy his fear: which fear of his as also his hope, fixed only upon the flesh, renders likewise the whole faculty of his apprehension carnal; and all the inward acts of worship issuing from the native strength of the soul, run out lavishly to the upper skin, and there harden into a crust of formality. Hence men came to scan the Scriptures by the letter, and in the covenant of our redemption magnified the external signs more than the quickening power of the spirit."—*Ibid.*—*Ed.*

observe the sentence passed by the All-just on the friends of the sufferer, who had hoped, like venal advocates, to purchase the favour of God by uttering truths of which in their own hearts they had neither conviction nor comprehension. The truth from the lips did not atone for the lie in the heart, while the rashness of agony in the searching and bewildered complainant, was forgiven in consideration of his sincerity and integrity in not disguising the true dictates of his reason and conscience, but avowing his incapability of solving a problem by his reason, which before the Christian dispensation the Almighty was pleased to solve only by declaring it to be beyond the limits of human reason. Having insensibly passed into a higher and more serious style than I had first intended, I will venture to appeal to these self-obscurants, whose faith dwells in the land of the shadow of darkness, these papists without a pope, and protestants who protest only against all protesting; and will appeal to them in words which yet more immediately concern them as Christians, in the hope that they will lend a fearless ear to the learned apostle, when he both assures and labours to persuade them that they were called in Christ to all perfectness in spiritual knowledge and full assurance of understanding in the mystery of God. There can be no end without means: and God furnishes no means that exempt us from the task and duty of joining our own best endeavours. The original stock, or wild olive tree of our natural powers, was not given us to be burned or blighted, but to be grafted on. We are not only not forbidden to examine and propose our doubts, so it be done with humility and proceed from a real desire to know the truth; but we are repeatedly commanded so to do: and with a most unchristian spirit *must that man have read the preceding passages, if he can*

interpret any one sentence as having for its object excuse a too numerous class, who, to use the words St. Augustine, *quærunt non ut fidem sed ut infidelitatem inveniant*;—such as examine not to find reasons for faith but pretexts for infidelity.

ESSAY XII.

Such is the iniquity of men, that they suck in opinions as wild asses do the wind, without distinguishing the wholesome from the corrupted air, and then live upon it at a venture : and when all their confidence is built upon zeal and mistake, yet therefore because they are zealous and mistaken, they are impatient of contradiction.—**JEREMY TAYLOR.***

"If," observes the eloquent bishop in the work, from which my motto is selected, "an opinion plainly and directly brings in a crime, as if a man preaches treason or sedition, his opinion is not his excuse. A man is nevertheless a traitor because he believes it lawful to commit treason ; and a man is a murderer if he kills his brother unjustly, although he should think that he was doing God good service thereby. Matters of fact are equally judicable, whether the principle of them be from within or from without."†

To dogmatize a crime, that is, to teach it as a doctrine, is itself a crime, great or small as the crime dogmatized is more or less palpably so. "You say," said Sir John Cheke, addressing himself to the papists of his day, "that you rebel for your religion. First tell me, what religion is that which teaches you to rebel." As my object in the present section is to treat of tolerance and intolerance in the public bearings of opinions and their propagation, I shall embrace this opportunity of selecting

* Epist. Dedicat. to the Liberty of Prophecyng. Vol. vii. p. 409. Heber's edit.—Ed.

† Liberty of Proph. a. 13.—Ed.

the two passages, which I have been long inclined to consider as the most eloquent in our English literature, though each in a very different style of eloquence, as indeed the authors were as dissimilar in their bias, if not in their faith, as two bishops of the same church can well be supposed to have been. I think too, I may venture to add, that both the extracts will be new to a very great majority of my readers. For the length I make no apology. It was part of my plan to allot two essays of *The Friend*, the one to a selection from our prose writers, and the other from our poets; but in both cases from works that do not occur in our ordinary reading.

The following passages are both on the same subject;—the first from Jeremy Taylor;—the second from Bishop Bedell.

1. The rise and progress of a controversy, from the speculative opinion of an individual to the revolution or intestine war of a nation.

“This is one of the inseparable characters of a heretic; he sets his whole communion and all his charity upon his article; for to be zealous in the schism, that is the characteristic of a good man, that is his note of Christianity; in all the rest he excuses you or tolerates you, provided you be a true believer; then you are one of the faithful, a good man and a precious, you are of the congregation of the saints, and one of the godly. All solidians do thus; and all that do thus are solidians, the church of Rome herself not excepted; for though in words she proclaims the possibility of keeping all the commandments; yet she dispenses easier with him that breaks them all, than with him that speaks one word against any of her articles, though but the least; even the eating of fish and forbidding flesh in Lent. So that

it is faith they regard more than charity, a right belief more than a holy life ; and for this you shall be with them upon terms easy enough, provided you go not a hair's breadth from any thing of her belief. For if you do, they have provided for you two deaths and two fires, both inevitable and one eternal. And this certainly is one of the greatest evils, of which the church of Rome is guilty : for this in itself is the greatest and unworthiest uncharitableness. But the procedure is of great use to their ends. For the greatest part of Christians are those that cannot consider things leisurely and wisely, searching their bottoms and discovering their causes, or foreseeing events which are to come after ; but are carried away by fear and hope, by affection and prepossession : and therefore the Roman doctors are careful to govern them as they will be governed. If you dispute, you gain, it may be, one, and lose five : but if you threaten them with damnation, you keep them in fetters ; for they that are *in fear of death, are all their lifetime in bondage*,* saith the apostle : and there is in the world nothing so potent as fear of the two deaths which are the two arms and grapples of iron by which the church of Rome takes and keeps her timorous or conscientious proselytes. The easy protestant calls upon you from Scripture to do your duty, to build a holy life upon a holy faith, the faith of the apostles and first disciples of our Lord ; he tells you if you err, and teaches ye the truth ; and if ye will obey, it is well, if not, he tells you of your sin, and that all sin deserves the wrath of God ; but judges no man's person, much less any states of men. He knows that God's judgments are righteous and true ; but he knows also, that his mercy absolves many per-

* Heb. ii. 15.

sons, who, in his just judgment, were condemned : and if he had a warrant from God to say, that he should destroy all the papists, as Jonas had concerning the Ninevites ; yet he remembers that every repentance, if it be sincere, will do more, and prevail greater, and last longer than God's anger will. Besides these things, there is a strange spring, and secret principle in every man's understanding, that it is oftentimes turned about by such impulses, of which no man can give an account. But we all remember a most wonderful instance of it in the disputation between the two Reynoldses, John and William ; the former of which being a papist, and the latter a protestant, met and disputed, with a purpose to confute and to convert each other. And so they did : for those arguments which were used, prevailed fully against their adversary, and yet did not prevail with themselves. The papist turned protestant, and the protestant became a papist, and so remained to their dying day. Of which some ingenious person gave a most handsome account in the following excellent epigram :—

*Bella inter geminos plusquam civilia fratres
 Traxerat ambiguus religionis apex.
 Ille reformatæ fidei pro partibus instat ;
 Isle reformandam denegat esse fidem.
 Propositis causæ rationibus, alter utrinque
 Concurrere pares, et cecidere pares.
 Quod fuit in votis, fratrem capit alter uterque ;
 Quod fuit in fatis, perdit uterque fidem.
 Captivi gemini sine captivante fuerunt,
 Et victor victi transfuga castra petit.
 Quod genus hoc pugnae est, ubi victus gaudet uterque,
 Et tamen alteruter se superasse dolet !*

“But further yet, he considers the natural and regular infirmities of mankind ; and God considers them much more ; he knows that in man there is nothing admirable but his ignorance and weakness ; his prejudice, and the

infallible certainty of being deceived in many things : he sees that wicked men oftentimes know much more than many very good men ; and that the understanding is not of itself considerable in morality, and effects nothing in rewards and punishments : it is the will only that rules man and can obey God. He sees and deplors it, that many men study hard and understand little ; that they dispute earnestly and understand not one another at all ; that affections creep so certainly, and mingle with their arguing, that the argument is lost, and nothing remains but the conflict of two adversaries' affections ; that a man is so willing, so easy, so ready to believe what makes for his opinion, so hard to understand an argument against himself, that it is plain it is the principle within, not the argument without, that determines him. He observes also that all the world (a few individuals excepted) are unalterably determined to the religion of their country, of their family, of their society ; that there is never any considerable change made, but what is made by war and empire, by fear and hope. He remembers that it is a rare thing to see a Jesuit of the Dominican opinion, or a Dominican (until of late) of the Jesuit ; but every order gives laws to the understanding of their novices, and they never change. He considers there is such ambiguity in words, by which all lawgivers express their meaning ; that there is such abstruseness in mysteries of religion, that some things are so much too high for us, that we cannot understand them rightly ; and yet they are so sacred, and concerning, that men will think they are bound to look into them, as far as they can ; that it is no wonder if they quickly go too far, where no understanding, if it were fitted for it, could go far enough ; but in these things it will be hard not to be deceived, since our words cannot rightly express those

things; that there is such variety of human understandings, that men's faces differ not so much as their souls; and that if there were not so much difficulty in things, yet they could not but be variously apprehended by several men. And hereto he considers, that in twenty opinions, it may be that not one of them is true; nay, whereas Varro reckoned that among the old philosophers there were eight hundred opinions concerning the *summum bonum*, that yet not one of them hit the right. He sees also that in all religions, in all societies, in all families, and in all things, opinions differ; and since opinions are too often begot by passion, by passions and violence they are kept; and every man is too apt to overvalue his own opinion; and out of a desire that every man should conform his judgment to his that teaches, men are apt to be earnest in their persuasion, and overact the proposition; and from being true as he supposes, he will think it profitable; and if you warm him either with confidence or opposition, he quickly tells you it is necessary; and as he loves those that think as he does, so he is ready to hate them that do not; and then secretly from wishing evil to him, he is apt to believe evil will come to him; and that it is just it should; and by this time the opinion is troublesome, and puts other men upon their guard against it; and then while passion reigns, and reason is modest and patient, and talks not loud like a storm, victory is more regarded than truth, and men call God into the party, and his judgments are used for arguments, and the threatenings of the Scripture are snatched up in haste, and men throw arrows, firebrands, and death, and by this time all the world is in an uproar. All this, and a thousand things more the English protestants considering deny not their communion to any Christian who desires it, and believes the apostles' creed,

and is of the religion of the first four general councils; they hope well of all that live well; they receive into their bosom all true believers of what church soever; and for them that err, they instruct them, and then leave them to their liberty, to stand or fall before their own master."*

2. A doctrine not the less safe for being the more charitable.

"Christ our Lord hath given us, amongst others, two infallible notes to know the church. *My sheep*, saith he, *hear my voice*:† and again, *By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another*.‡—What! shall we stand upon conjectural arguments from that which men say? We are partial to ourselves, malignant to our opposites. Let Christ be heard who he his, who not. And for the hearing of his voice—O that it might be the issue! But I see you decline it, therefore I leave it also for the present. That other is that which now I stand upon,—‘the badge of Christ’s sheep.’ Not a likelihood, but a certain token whereby every man may know them: *by this*, saith he, *shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have charity one towards another*.—Thanks be to God, this mark of our Saviour is in us which you with our schismatics and other enemies want. As Solomon found the true mother by her natural affection, that chose rather to yield to her adversary’s plea, claiming her child, than endure that it should be cut in pieces; so may it soon be found at this day whether is the true mother. Ours, that saith, give her the living child and kill him not; or yours, that if she may not have

* Dissuasive from Popery. Part II.—B. i. c. 7.—Ed.

† John x. 27.—Ed.

‡ 1b. xiii. 35.—Ed.

it, is content it be killed rather than want of her will. 'Alas !' (saith ours even of those that leave her) 'these be my children ! I have borne them to Christ in baptism : I have nourished them as I could with mine own breasts, his testaments. I would have brought them up to man's estate, as their free birth and parentage deserves. Whether it be their lightness or discontent, or her enticing words and gay shews, they leave me : they have found a better mother. Let them live yet, though in bondage. I shall have patience ; I permit the care of them to their father ; I beseech him to keep them that they do no evil. If they make their peace with him, I am satisfied : they have not hurt me at all.' 'Nay,' but saith yours, 'I sit alone as queen and mistress of Christ's family, he that hath not me for his mother, cannot have God for his father. Mine therefore are these, either born or adopted ; and if they will not be mine they shall be none.' So without expecting Christ's sentence she cuts with the temporal sword, hangs, burns, draws, those that she perceives inclined to leave her, or have left her already. So she kills with the spiritual sword those that are subject not to her, yea, thousands of souls that not only have no means so to do, but many which never so much as have heard whether there be a pope of Rome or no. Let our Solomon be judge between them, yea, judge you, Mr. Waddesworth ! more seriously and maturely, not by guesses, but by the very mark of Christ, which wanting yourselves you have unawares discovered in us : judge, I say, without passion and partiality, according to Christ's word, which is his flock, which is his church."*

* Letter to a friend who had deserted the Church of England for that of Rome.—*Ed.*

ESSAY XIII.

ON THE LAW OF NATIONS.

Πρὸς πόλεως εὐδαιμονίαν καὶ δικαιοσύνην πάντα ἰδιώτων ἔμπροσθεν
τίταται φύσει· τούτων δὲ τὰ μὲν ἀνθρώπινα εἰς τὰ θεῖα, τὰ δὲ θεῖα εἰς
τὸν ἡγεμόνα νοῦν ξύμπαντα δεῖ βλέπειν, οὐχ ὡς πρὸς ἀρετῆς τι μέρος,
ἀλλὰ πρὸς ἀρετὴν ἐν ἀρεταῖς δεῖ ἐκμενεῖσθαι, ὡς πρὸς νόμον τίνα
νομοθετοῦντα. Plato.

For all things that regard the well-being and justice of a state are pre-ordained and established in the nature of the individual. Of these it behoves that the merely human (the temporal and fluxional) should be referred and subordinated to the divine in man, and the divine in like manner to the Supreme Mind, so however that the state is not to regulate its actions by reference to any particular form and fragment of virtue, but must fix its eye on that virtue, which is the abiding spirit and (as it were) *substratum* in all the virtues, as on a law that is itself legislative.

It were absurd to suppose, that individuals should be under a law of moral obligation, and yet that a million of the same individuals acting collectively or through representatives, should be exempt from all law: for morality is no accident of human nature, but its essential characteristic. A being altogether without morality is either a beast or a fiend, accordingly as we conceive this want of conscience to be natural or self-produced; a mere negation of goodness, or the consequence of rebellion to it. Yet were it possible to conceive a man wholly immoral, it would remain impossible to conceive him without a moral obligation to be otherwise; and none, but a madman, will imagine that the essential qualities of any thing can be altered by its becoming part of an

aggregate ; that a grain of corn, for instance, shall cease to contain flour, as soon as it is part of a peck or bushel. It is therefore grounded in the nature of the thing, and not by a mere fiction of the mind, that wise men, who have written on the law of nations, contemplate the several states of the civilized world, as so many individuals, and equally with the latter under a moral obligation to exercise their free agency within such bounds, as render it compatible with the existence of free agency in others. We may represent to ourselves this original free agency, as a right of common, the formation of separate states as an inclosure of this common, the allotments awarded severally to the co-proprietors as constituting national rights, and the law of nations as the common register office of their title deeds. But in all morality, though the principle, which is the abiding spirit of the law, remains perpetual and unaltered, even as that Supreme Reason in whom and from whom it has its being, yet the letter of the law, that is, the application of it to particular instances, and the mode of realizing it in actual practice, must be modified by the existing circumstances. What we should desire to do, the conscience alone will inform us ; but how and when we are to make the attempt, and to what extent it is in our power to accomplish it, are questions for the judgment, and require an acquaintance with facts and their bearings on each other. Thence the improvement of our judgment, and the increase of our knowledge, on all subjects included within our sphere of action, are not merely advantages recommended by prudence, but absolute duties imposed on us by conscience.

As the circumstances then, under which men act as statesmen, are different from those under which they act as individuals, a proportionate difference must be expected

in the practical rules by which their public conduct is to be determined. Let me not be misunderstood: I speak of a difference in the practical rules, not in the moral law itself, the means of administering in particular cases, and under given circumstances, which it is the sole object of these rules to point out. The spirit continues one and the same, though it may vary its form according to the element into which it is transported. This difference with its grounds and consequences it is the province of the philosophical publicist to discover and display: and exactly in this point (I speak with unfeigned diffidence) it appears to me that the writers on the law of nations,* whose works I have had the opportunity of studying, have been least successful.

In what does the law of nations differ from the laws enacted by a particular state for its own subjects? The solution is evident. The law of nations, considered apart from the common principle of all morality, is not fixed or positive in itself, nor supplied with any regular means of being enforced. Like those duties in private life which, for the same reasons, moralists have entitled imperfect duties (though the most atrocious guilt may be involved in the omission or violation of them,) the law of nations appeals only to the conscience and prudence of the parties concerned. Wherein then does it differ from the moral laws which the reason, considered as conscience,

* Grotius, Bynkerschoek, Puffendorf, Wolfe, and Vattel; to whose works I must add, as comprising whatever is most valuable in the preceding authors, with many important improvements and additions, Robinson's Reports of Cases in the Admiralty Court, under Sir W. Scott: to whom international law is under no less obligation than the law of commercial proceedings was to the late Lord Mansfield. As I have never seen Sir W. Scott, nor either by myself or my connections enjoy the honour of the remotest acquaintance with him, I trust that even by those who may think my opinion erroneous, I shall not at least be suspected of intentional flattery. 1811.

dictates for the conduct of individuals? This is a more difficult question; but my answer would be determined by, and grounded on, the obvious differences of the circumstances in the two cases. Remember then, that we are now reasoning, not as sophists or system-mongers, but as men anxious to discover what is right in order that we may practise it, or at least give our suffrage and the influence of our opinion in recommending its practice. We must therefore confine the question to those cases, in which honest men and real patriots can suppose any controversy to exist between real patriotism and common honesty. The objects of the patriot are, that his countrymen should, as far as circumstances permit, enjoy what the Creator designed for the enjoyment of animals endowed with reason, and of course that they should have it in their power to develop those faculties which were given them to be developed. He would do his best that every one of his countrymen should possess whatever all men may and should possess, and that a sufficient number should be enabled and encouraged to acquire those excellencies which, though not necessary or possible for all men, are yet to all men useful and honourable. He knows that patriotism itself is a necessary link in the golden chain of our affections and virtues, and turns away with indignant scorn from the false philosophy or mistaken religion, which would persuade him that cosmopolitism is nobler than nationality, the human race a sublimer object of love than a people; and that Plato, Luther, Newton, and their equals, formed themselves neither in the market nor the senate, but in the world, and for all men of all ages. True! But where, and among whom are these giant exceptions produced? In the wide empires of Asia, where millions of human beings acknowledge no other bond but that of a common slavery.

and are distinguished on the map but by a name which themselves perhaps never heard, or hearing altho? No! in a circle defined by human affections, the first firm sod within which becomes sacred beneath the quickened step of the returning citizen;—here, where the powers and interests of men spread without confusion through a common sphere, like the vibrations propagated in the air by a single voice, distinct yet coherent, and all uniting to express one thought and the same feeling;—here, where even the common soldier dares force a passage for his comrades by gathering up the bayonets of the enemy into his own breast, because his country expected every man to do his duty, and this not after he has been hardened by habit, but, as probably in his first battle; not reckless or hopeless, but braving death from a keener sensibility to those blessings which make life dear, to those qualities which render himself worthy to enjoy them;—here, where the royal crown is loved and worshipped as a glory around the sainted head of freedom;—where the rustic at his plough whistles with equal enthusiasm, “God save the King,” and “Britons never shall be slaves,” or, perhaps, leaves one thistle unweeded in his garden, because it is the symbol of his dear native land;*

* I cannot here refuse myself the pleasure of recording a speech of the poet Burns, related to me by the lady to whom it was addressed. Having been asked by her, why in his more serious poems he had not changed the two or three Scotch words which seemed only to disturb the purity of the style,—the poet with great sweetness, and his usual happiness in reply, answered that in truth it would have been better, but—

The rough bur-thistle spreading wide
Amang the bearded bear,
I turn'd the weeder-clips aside
An' spar'd the symbol dear.

An author may be allowed to quote from his own poems, when he does it with as much modesty and felicity as Burns did in this instance.

—here, from within this circle defined, as light by shade, or rather as light within light, by its intensity,—here alone, and only within these magic circles, rise up the awful spirits, whose words are oracles for mankind, whose love embraces all countries, and whose voice sounds through all ages! Here, and here only, may we confidently expect those mighty minds to be reared and ripened, whose names are naturalized in foreign lands, the sure fellow-travellers of civilization, and yet render their own country dearer and more proudly dear to their own countrymen. This is indeed cosmopolitism, at once the nursing and the nurse of patriotic affection. This, and this alone, is genuine philanthropy, which like the olive tree, sacred to concord and to wisdom, fattens not exhausts the soil, from which it sprang, and in which it remains rooted. It is feebleness only which cannot be generous without injustice, or just without ceasing to be generous. Is the morning star less brilliant, or does a ray less fall on the golden fruitage of the earth, because the moons of Saturn too feed their lamps from the same sun? Even Germany,—though cursed with a base and hateful brood of nobles and princelings, cowardly and ravenous jackals to the very flocks entrusted to them as to shepherds, who hunt for the tiger and whine and wag their tails for his bloody offal—even Germany, the ever-changing boundaries of which superannuate the last year's map, and are altered as easily as the hurdles of a temporary sheep-fold, is still remembered with filial love and a patriot's pride, when the thoughtful German hears the names of Luther and Leibnitz. Ah! why, he sighs, why for herself in vain should my country have produced such a host of immortal minds! Yea, even the poor enslaved, degraded, and barbarized Greek can still point to the harbour of Tenedos, and say,—“There lay our

fleet when we were besieging Troy." Reflect a moment on the past history of this wonderful people. What were they while they remained free and independent,—when Greece resembled a collection of mirrors set in a single frame, each having its own focus of patriotism, yet all capable, as at Marathon and Platea, of converging to one point and of consuming a common foe? What were they then? The fountains of light and civilization, of truth and of beauty, to all mankind! they were the thinking head, the beating heart, of the whole world! They lost their independence, and with their independence their patriotism; and became the cosmopolites of antiquity. It has been truly observed by the author of the work for which Palm was murdered, that, after the first acts of severity, the Romans treated the Greeks not only more mildly than their other slaves and dependants, but behaved to them even affectionately and with munificence. The victor nation felt reverentially the presence of the visible and invisible deities that gave sanctity to every grove, every fountain, and every forum. "Think," (writes Pliny to one of his friends) "that you are sent into the province of Achaia, that true and genuine Greece, where civilization, letters, even corn, are believed to have been discovered; that you are sent to administer the affairs of free states, that is, to men eminently free, who have retained their natural right by valour, by services, by friendship, lastly by treaty and by religion. Revere the gods their founders, the sacred influences represented in those gods; revere their ancient glory and this very old age which in man is venerable, in cities sacred. Cherish in thyself a reverence of antiquity, a reverence for their great exploits, a reverence even for their fables. Detract nothing from the liberty, or the dignity, or even the pretensions of any state; keep before thine eyes that this is

the land which sent us our institutions, which gave us our laws, not after it was subjugated, but in compliance with our petition."* And what came out of these men, who were eminently free without patriotism, because without national independence? (which eminent freedom, however, Pliny himself, in the very next sentence, styles the shadow and *residuum* of liberty.)† While they were intense patriots, they were the benefactors of all mankind, legislators for the very nation that afterwards subdued and enslaved them. When, therefore, they became pure cosmopolites, and no partial affections interrupted their philanthropy, and when yet they retained their country, their language, and their arts, what noble works, what mighty discoveries may we not expect from them? If the applause of a little city, the first-rate town of a country not much larger than Yorkshire, and the encouragement of a Pericles, produced a Phidias, a Sophocles, and a constellation of other stars scarcely inferior in glory, what will not the applause of the world effect, and the boundless munificence of the world's imperial masters? Alas! no Sophocles appeared, no Phidias was born; individual genius fled with national independence, and the best products were cold and laborious copies of what their fathers had thought and invented in grandeur and majesty. At length nothing remained, but dastardly and cunning slaves, who avenged their own ruin and degradation by assisting to degrade and ruin their conquerors; and the golden harp of their divine language remained only as the frame on which priests and monks spun their dirty cobwebs of sophistry and superstition!

If then in order to be men we must be patriots, and

* Lib. VIII. Ep. 24.—Ed.

† *Quibus reliquam umbram et residuum libertatis nomen eripere, durum, ferum, barbarumque est.*—Ib.—Ed.

patriotism cannot exist without national independence, we need no new or particular code of morals to justify us in placing and preserving our country in that relative situation which is most favourable to its independence. But the true patriot is aware that this object is not to be accomplished by a system of general conquest, such as was pursued by Philip of Macedon and his son, nor yet by the political annihilation of the one state, which happens to be its most formidable rival;—the unwise measure recommended by Cato, and carried into effect by the Romans in the instance of Carthage. Not by the latter;—for rivalry between two nations conduces to the independence of both, calls forth or fosters all the virtues by which national security is maintained;—and still less by the former; for the victor nation itself must at length, by the very extension of its own conquest, sink into a mere province; nay, it will most probably become the most abject portion of the empire, and the most cruelly oppressed, both because it will be more feared and suspected by the common tyrant, and because it will be the sink and centre of his luxury and corruption. Even in cases of actual injury and just alarm the patriot sets bounds to the reprisal of national vengeance, and contents himself with such securities as are compatible with the welfare, though not with the ambitious projects of the nation, the aggressions of which had given the provocation: for as patriotism inspires no super-human faculties, neither can it dictate any conduct which would require such. He is too conscious of his own ignorance of the future, to dare extend his calculations into remote periods; nor, because he is a statesman, arrogates to himself the cares of Providence and the government of the world. How does he know, but that the very independence and consequent virtues of the nation,

which in the anger of cowardice he would fain reduce to absolute insignificance, and rob even of its ancient name, may in some future emergency be the destined guardians of his own country; and that the power which now alarms, may hereafter protect and preserve it? The experience of history authorizes to believe not only in the possibility, but even the probability, of such an event. An American commander,* who has deserved and received the highest honours which his grateful country, through her assembled representatives, could bestow upon him, once said to me with a sigh: "In an evil hour for my country did the French and Spaniards abandon Louisiana to the United States. We were not sufficiently a country before: and should we ever be mad enough to drive the English from Canada and her other North American provinces, we shall soon cease to be a country at all. Without local attachment, without national honour, we shall resemble a swarm of insects that settle on the fruits of the earth to corrupt and consume them, rather than men who love and cleave to the land of their forefathers. After a shapeless anarchy and a series of civil wars, we shall at last be formed into many countries; unless the vices engendered in the process should demand further punishment, and we should previously fall beneath the despotism of some military adventurer, like a lion consumed by an inward disease, prostrate and helpless beneath the beak and talons of a vulture, or yet meaner bird of prey." †

* Decatur. — *Ed.* † See Table Talk, p. 168, 2nd edit. — *Ed.*

ESSAY XIV.

Ὅ, τι μὲν πρὸς τὸν τοῦ ὅλου πλοῦτον, μᾶλλον δὲ πρὸς τι φάντασμα πόλεως ἀπάσης, ὃ πανταχῇ καὶ οὐδαμῇ ἐστὶ, φέρει μᾶθημα καὶ ἐπιτήδευμα, τοῦτο χρήσιμον καὶ σόφον τί δοξασθήσεται· τῶν δὲ ἄλλων καταγελᾷ ὁ πολιτικός. Ταύτην τὴν αἰτίαν χρὴ φάναι τοῦ μήτε ἄλλο καλόν, μήτε τὰ πρὸς τὸν πόλεμον μεγαλοπρέπως ἀσκεῖν τὰς πόλεις, τῶν πολιτῶν μάλ' ἐρίοτε οὐκ ἀφυῶν ὄντων, δυστυχούντων γε μήν. Πῶς λέγεις; Πῶς μὲν οὖν αὐτοὺς οὐ λέγοιμ' ἂν τὸ παράπαν δυστυχεῖς, οἷς γε ἀνάγκη διὰ βίου πεινῶσι τὴν ψυχὴν ἀεὶ τὴν αὐτῶν διεξιθεῖν.

PLATO.*

Whatever study or doctrine bears upon the wealth of the whole, say rather on a certain phantom of a state in the whole, which is every where and no where, this shall be deemed most useful and wise; and all else is the state-craftsman's scorn. This we dare pronounce the cause why nations torpid on their dignity in general, conduct their wars so little in a grand and magnanimous spirit, while the citizens are too often wretched, though endowed with high capabilities by nature. How say you? Nay, how should I not call them wretched, who are under the unrelenting necessity of wasting away their life in the mere search after the means of supporting it?

In the preceding essay I treated of what may be wisely desired in respect to our foreign relations. The same sanity of mind will the true patriot display in all that regards the internal prosperity of his country. He will reverence not only whatever tends to make the component individuals more happy, and more worthy of happiness; but likewise whatever tends to bind them more closely together as a people;—that as a multitude

* *De Legibus*, viii.—The Greek is chiefly taken from the beginning of this book of the *Laws*; but it is not taken consecutively; some of the expressions are from other parts of Plato, and some seem to be the Author's own.—Ed.

of parts and functions make up one human body, so the whole multitude of his countrymen may, by the visible and invisible influences of religion, language, laws, customs, and the reciprocal dependence and re-action of trade and agriculture, be organised into one body politic. But much as he desires to see all become a whole, he places limits even to this wish, and abhors that system of policy which would blend men into a state by the dissolution of all those virtues which make them happy and estimable as individuals. Sir James Steuart, after stating the case of the vine-dresser, who is proprietor of a bit of land, on which grain (enough, and no more) is raised for himself and family, and who provides for their other wants, of clothing, salt, &c. by his extra labour as a vine-dresser, observes:—‘From this example we discover the difference between agriculture exercised as a trade, and as a direct means of subsisting. We have the two species in the vine-dresser: he labours the vineyard as a trade, and his spot of ground for subsistence. We may farther conclude, that as to the last part he is only useful to himself; but as to the first, he is useful to the society and becomes a member of it; consequently were it not for his trade the state would lose nothing, although the vine-dresser and his land were both swallowed up by an earthquake.’*

Now this contains the sublime philosophy of the sect of economists. They worship a kind of non-entity under the different words, the state, the whole, the society, and so on, and to this idol they make bloodier sacrifices than ever the Mexicans did to Tescalipoca. All, that is, each and every sentient being in a given tract, are made diseased and vicious, in order that each may become

* Polit. Econ. vol. i. c. 14.—Ed.

useful to all, or the state, or the society,—that is, to the word, all, the word state, or the word society. The absurdity may be easily perceived by omitting the words relating to this idol—as for instance—in a former paragraph of the same (in most respects) excellent work: ‘If it therefore happens that an additional number produced do no more than feed themselves, then I perceive no advantage gained from their production.’* What! No advantage gained by, for instance, ten thousand happy, intelligent, and immortal beings having been produced!—O yes! but no advantage to this society.—What is this society, this whole state? Is it any thing else but a word of convenience to express at once the aggregate of confederated individuals living in a certain district? Let the sum total of each man’s happiness be supposed = 1000; and suppose ten thousand men produced, who neither made swords nor poison, nor found corn nor clothes for those who did—but who procured by their labour food and raiment for themselves, and for their children;—would not that society be richer by 10,000,000 parts of happiness? And think you it possible, that ten thousand happy human beings can exist together without increasing each other’s happiness, or that it will not overflow into countless channels,† and diffuse itself through the rest of the society?

The poor vine-dresser rises from sweet sleep, worships

* Polit. Econ. vol. i. c. 14.—*Ed.*

† Weil, and in the spirit of genuine philosophy, does the poet describe such beings as men

Who being innocent do for that cause
Bestir them in good deeds —————

Wordsworth.

Providence, by the ceaseless activity which it has implanted in our nature, has sufficiently guarded against an innocence without virtue.

his Maker, goes with his wife and children into his little plot—returns to his hut at noon, and eats the produce of the similar labour of a former day. Is he useful? No, not yet. Suppose then, that during the remaining hours of the day he endeavoured to provide for his moral and intellectual appetites, by physical experiments and philosophical research, by acquiring knowledge for himself and communicating it to his wife and children. Would he be useful then? He useful! ‘The state would lose nothing although the vine-dresser and his land were both swallowed up by an earthquake!’ Well then, instead of devoting the latter half of each day to his closet, his laboratory, or to neighbourly conversation, suppose he goes to the vineyard, and from the ground which would maintain in health, virtue, and wisdom, twenty of his fellow-creatures, helps to raise a quantity of liquor that will disease the bodies and debauch the souls of a hundred—Is he useful now? O yes! a very useful man, and a most excellent citizen.*

In what then does the law between state and state differ from that between man and man? For hitherto we seem to have discovered no variation. The law of nations is the law of common honesty, modified by the circumstances in which states differ from individuals. According to my best understanding, the differences may be reduced to this one point: that the influence of example in any extraordinary case, as the possible occasion of an action apparently like, though in reality very different, is of considerable importance in the moral calculations of an individual; but of little, if any, in

* So in Jollie's and Hutchinson's History of Cumberland, the writer speaks of a small estatesman, bred to a rural life, who cannot betake himself from an indolent habit to manufacturing and labour!—*Introd.* p. 39. 1830.

those of a nation. The reasons are evident. In the first place, in cases concerning which there can be any dispute between an honest man and a true patriot, the circumstances, which at once authorise and discriminate the measure, are so marked and peculiar and notorious, that it is incapable of being drawn into a precedent by any other state under dissimilar circumstances; except perhaps as a mere pretext for an action, which had been predetermined without reference to this authority, and which would have taken place, though it had never existed. But if so strange a thing should happen, as a second coincidence of the same circumstances, or of circumstances sufficiently similar to render the prior measure a fair precedent; then, if the one action was justifiable, so will the other be; and without any reference to the former, which in this case may be useful as a light, but cannot be requisite as an authority. Secondly, in extraordinary cases it is ridiculous to suppose that the conduct of states will be determined by example. We know that they neither will, nor in the nature of things can, be determined by any other consideration but that of the imperious circumstances, which render a particular measure advisable. But lastly, and more important than all, individuals are and must be under positive laws: and so very great is the advantage which results from the regularity of legal decisions, and their consequent capability of being fore-known and relied upon, that equity itself must sometimes be sacrificed to it. For the very letter of a positive law is part of its spirit. But states neither are, nor can be, under positive laws. The only fixed part of the law of nations is the spirit: the letter of the law consists wholly in the circumstances to which the spirit of the law is applied. It is mere puerile declamation to rail against

a country, as having imitated the very measures for which it had most blamed its ambitious enemy, if that enemy had previously changed all the relative circumstances which had existed for him, and therefore rendered his conduct iniquitous; but which, having been removed, however iniquitously, cannot without absurdity be supposed any longer to control the measures of an innocent nation, necessitated to struggle for its own safety; especially when the measures in question were adopted for the very purpose of restoring those circumstances.

There are times when it would be wise to regard patriotism as a light that is in danger of being blown out, rather than as a fire which needs to be fanned by the winds of party spirit. There are times when party spirit, without any unwonted excess may yet become faction; and though in general not less useful than natural in a free government, may under particular emergencies prove fatal to freedom itself. I trust I am writing to those who think with me, that to have blackened a ministry, however strong or rational our dislike may be of the persons who compose it, is a poor excuse and a miserable compensation for the crime of unnecessarily blackening the character of our country. Under this conviction, I request my reader to cast his eye back on my last argument, and then to favour me with his patient attention while I attempt at once to explain its purport and to show its cogency.

Let us transport ourselves in fancy to the age and country of the patriarchs, or, if the reader prefers it to, some small colony uninfluenced by the mother country, which has not organised itself into a state, or agreed to acknowledge any one particular governor. We will suppose this colony to consist of from twenty to thirty households or separate establishments, differing greatly

from each other in the number of retainers and in extent of possessions. Each household, however, possesses its own domain, the least equally with the greatest, in full right; and its master is an independent sovereign within his own boundaries. This mutual understanding and tacit agreement we may well suppose to have been the gradual result of many feuds, which had produced misery to all and real advantage to none; and that the same sober and reflecting persons, dispersed through the different establishments, who had brooded about this state of things, had likewise coincided in the propriety of some other prudent and humane regulations, which from the authority of these wise men or points, in which they were unanimous, and from the evident good sense of the rules themselves, were acknowledged throughout the whole colony, though they were never voted into a formal law, though the determination of the cases, to which these rules were applicable, had not been entrusted to any recognised judge, nor their enforcement delegated to any particular magistrate. Of these virtual laws, this, we may safely conclude, would be the chief: that as no man ought to interfere in the affairs of another against his will, so if any master of a household, instead of occupying himself with the improvement of his own fields and flocks, or with the better regulation of his own establishment, should be foolish and wicked enough to employ his children and servants in breaking down the fences and taking possession of the lands and property of a fellow-colonist, or in turning the head of the family out of his house, and forcing those that remained to acknowledge himself as their governor instead, and to obey whomever he might please to appoint as his deputy—it would then become the duty and the interest of the other colonists to join against the aggressor, and to do all

in their power to prevent him from accomplishing his bad purposes, or to compel him to make restitution and compensation. The mightier the aggressor, and the weaker the injured party, the more cogent would the motive become for restraining the one and protecting the other. For it would be plain that he who was suffered to overpower, one by one, the weaker proprietors, and render the members, of their establishment subservient to his will, must soon become an over-match for those who were formerly his equals ; and the mightiest would differ from the meanest only by being the last victim.

This allegoric fable faithfully portrays the law of nations and the balance of power among the European states. Let us proceed with it in the form of history. In the second or third generation the proprietors too generally disregarded the good old opinion, that what injured any could be of real advantage to none ; and treated those, who still possessed it, as fit only to instruct children in their catechism. By the avarice of some, the cowardice of others, and by the corruption and want of foresight in the greater part, the former state of things had been completely changed, and the tacit compact set at nought, the general acknowledgment of which had been so instrumental in producing this state and in preserving it, as long as it lasted. The stronger had preyed on the weaker, whose wrongs, however, did not remain long unavenged. For the same selfishness and blindness to the future, which had induced the wealthy to trample on the rights of the poorer proprietors, prevented them from assisting each other effectually, when they were themselves attacked, one after the other, by the most powerful of all ; and from a concurrence of circumstances attacked so successfully, that of the whole colony few remained, that were not, directly or indirectly,

the creatures and dependents of one overgrown establishment. Say rather, of its new master, an adventurer whom chance and poverty had brought thither, and who in better times would have been employed in the swineyard, or the slaughterhouse, from his moody temper and his aversion to all the arts that tended to improve either the land or those that were to be maintained by its produce. He was however eminent for other qualities, which were still better suited to promote his power among those degenerate colonists; for he feared neither God nor his own conscience. The most solemn oaths could not bind him; the most deplorable calamities could not awaken his pity; and when others were asleep, he was either brooding over some scheme of robbery and murder, or with a part of his banditti actually employed in laying waste his neighbour's fences, or in undermining the walls of their houses. His natural cunning, undistracted by any honest avocations, and meeting with no obstacle either in his head or heart, and above all, having been quickened and strengthened by constant practice and favoured by the times with all conceivable opportunities, ripened at last into a surprising genius for oppression and tyranny; and, as we must distinguish him by some name, we will call him *Misetes*.^{*} The only estate, which remained able to bid defiance to the common enemy, was that of Pamphilus,[†] superior to *Misetes* in wealth, and his equal in strength; though not in the power of doing mischief, and still less in the wish. Their characters were indeed perfectly contrasted: for it may be truly said, that throughout the whole colony there was not a single establishment which did not owe some of its best buildings, the increased produce of its

^{*} Buonaparte.—*Ed.*

[†] England.—*Ed.*

fields, its improved implements of industry, and the general more decent appearance of its members, to the information given and the encouragements afforded by Pamphilus and those of his household. Whoever raised more than they wanted for their own establishment, were sure to find a ready purchaser in Pamphilus, and oftentimes for articles which they had themselves been before accustomed to regard as worthless, or even as nuisances; and they received in return things necessary or agreeable, and always in one respect at least useful, that they roused the purchaser to industry and its accompanying virtues. In this intercommunion all were benefited: for the wealth of Pamphilus was increased by the increasing industry of his fellow-colonists, and their industry needed the support and encouraging influences of Pamphilus's capital. To this good man and his estimable household Misetes bore the most implacable hatred, and had publicly sworn that he would root him out; the only sort of oath which he was not likely to break by any want of will or effort on his own part.

But fortunately for Pamphilus, his main property consisted of one compact estate divided from Misetes and the rest of the colony by a wide and dangerous river, with the exception of one small plantation which belonged to an independent proprietor whom we will name Lathrodænus;* a man of no influence in the colony, but much respected by Pamphilus. They were indeed relations by blood originally, and afterwards by inter-marriages; and it was to the power and protection of Pamphilus that Lathrodænus owed his independence and prosperity, amid the general distress and slavery of the other proprietors. Not less fortunately did it

* Denmark.—Ed.

happen, that the means of passing the river were possessed exclusively by Pamphilus and his above mentioned kinsman; and not only the boats themselves, but all the means of constructing and navigating them. As the very existence of Lathrodacnus, as an independent colonist, had no solid ground but in the strength and prosperity of Pamphilus; and as the interests of the one in no respect interfered with those of the other; Pamphilus for a considerable time remained without any anxiety, and looked on the river-craft of Lathrodacnus with as little alarm, as on those of his own establishment. It did not disquiet him, that Lathrodacnus had remained neutral in the quarrel. Nay, though many advantages, which in peaceful times would have belonged to Pamphilus, were now transferred to his neighbour, and had more than doubled the extent and profit of his concern, Pamphilus, instead of repining at this, was glad that some good at least to some one came out of the general evil. Great then was his surprise, when he discovered, that without any conceivable reason Lathrodacnus had employed himself in building and collecting a very unusual number of such boats, as were of no use to him in his traffic, but designed exclusively as ferry-boats; and what was still stranger and more alarming, that he chose to keep these in a bay on the other side of the river, opposite to the one small plantation, along side of Pamphilus' estate, from which plantation Lathrodacnus derived the materials for building them. Willing to believe this conduct a transient whim of his neighbour's, occasioned partly by his vanity, and partly by envy (to which latter passion the want of a liberal education, and the not sufficiently comprehending the grounds of his own prosperity, had rendered him subject) Pamphilus contented himself for a while with

urgent yet friendly remonstrances. The only answer, which Lathrodaenus vouchsafed to return, was, that by the law of the colony, which Pamphilus had made so many professions of revering, every proprietor was an independent sovereign within his own boundaries; that the boats were his own, and the opposite shore, to which they were fastened, part of a field which belonged to him; and, in short that Pamphilus had no right to interfere with the management of his property, which, trifling as it might be, compared with that of Pamphilus, was no less sacred by the law of the colony. To this uncourteous rebuff Pamphilus replied with a fervent wish, that Lathrodaenus could with more propriety have appealed to a law, as still subsisting, which, he well knew, had been effectually annulled by the unexampled tyranny and success of Misetes, together with the circumstances which had given occasion to the law, and made it wise and practicable. He further urged, that this law was not made for the benefit of any one man, but for the common safety and advantage of all;—that it was absurd to suppose that either he (Pamphilus) or Lathrodaenus himself, or any other proprietor, ever did or could acknowledge this law in the sense that it was to survive the very circumstances of which it was the mere reflex. Much less could they have even tacitly assented to it, if they had ever understood it as authorising one neighbour to endanger the absolute ruin of another, who had perhaps fifty times the property to lose, and perhaps ten times the number of souls to answer for, and yet forbidding the injured person to take any steps in his own defence; and lastly, that this law gave no right without imposing a corresponding duty. Therefore if Lathrodaenus insisted on the rights given him by the law, he ought at the same time to perform the duties which it

required, and join heart and hand with Pamphilus in his endeavours to defend his independence, to restore the former state of the colony, and with this to re-enforce the old law in opposition to Misetes who had enslaved the one and set at naught the other. So ardently was Pamphilus attached to the law, that excepting his own safety and independence there was no price which he would not pay, no sacrifice which he would not make for its restoration. His reverence for the very memory of the law was such, that the mere appearance of transgressing it would be a heavy affliction to him. In the hope therefore of gaining from the avarice of Lathrodacnus that consent which he could not obtain from his justice or neighbourly kindness, he offered to give him in full right a plantation ten times the value of all his boats, and yet, whenever the colony should once more be settled, to restore the boats; if he would only permit Pamphilus to secure them, during the present state of things, on his side of the river, retaining whatever he really wanted for the passage of his own household.

To all these persuasions and entreaties Lathrodacnus turned a deaf ear; and Pamphilus remained agitated and undetermined, till at length he received certain intelligence that Lathrodacnus had called a council of the chief members of his establishment, in consequence of the threats of Misetes, that he would treat him as the friend and ally of Pamphilus, if he did not declare himself his enemy. Partly for the sake of a large meadow belonging to him on the other side of the river which it was not easy to secure from the tyrant, but still more from envy and the irritable temper of a proud inferior, Lathrodacnus, and with him the majority of his advisers (though to the great discontent of the few wise heads

among them) settled it finally that if he should be again pressed on this point by Misetes, he would join him and commence hostilities against his old neighbour and kinsman. It is indeed but too probable that he had long brooded over this scheme: for to what other end could he have strained his income, and over-worked his servants in building and fitting up such a number of passage-boats? As soon as this information was received by Pamphilus, and this from a quarter which it was impossible for him to discredit, he obeyed the dictates of self-preservation, took possession of the passage-boats by force, and brought them over to his own grounds; but without any further injury to Lathrodæmus, and still urging him to accept a compensation and continue in that amity which was so manifestly their common interest. Instantly a great outcry was raised against Pamphilus, who was charged in the bitterest terms with having first abused Misetes, and then imitated him in his worst acts of violence. In the calmness of a good conscience Pamphilus contented himself with the following reply: "Even so—if I were out on a shooting party with a Quaker for my companion, and saw coming on towards us an old footpad and murderer, who had made known his intention of killing me wherever he might meet me; and if my companion the Quaker would neither give me up his gun, nor even discharge it as (we will suppose) I had just before unfortunately discharged my own; if he would neither promise to assist me nor even promise to make the least resistance to the robber's attempt to disarm himself—you might call me a robber for wresting this gun from my companion, though for no other purpose but that I might at least do for myself what he ought to have done, but would not do either for or with me! Even so, and as plausibly

you might exclaim O the hypocrite Pamphilus ! Who has not been deafened with his complaints against robbers and footpads ? and lo ! he himself has turned footpad, and commenced by robbing his peaceful and unsuspecting companion of his double-barrelled gun !”

It is the business of the Friend to lay down principles, not to make the applications of them to particular, much less to recent, cases. If any such there be to which these principles are fairly applicable, the reader is no less master of the facts than the writer of the present essay. If not the principles remain ; and I have finished the task which the plan of this work imposed on me, of proving the identity of international law and the law of morality in spirit, and the reasons of their difference in practice, in those extreme cases in which alone they have been allowed to differ.

POSTSCRIPT.

The preceding essay has more than its natural interest for me from the abuse, which it brought down on me as the defender of the attack on Copenhagen, and the seizure of the Danish fleet. The odium of the measure rested wholly on the commencement of hostilities without a previous declaration of war. Now it is remarkable, that in a work published many years before this event, Professor Beek had made this very point the subject of a particular chapter in his admirable comments on the Law of Nations ; and every one of the circumstances stated by him as forming an exception to the moral necessity of previous declaration of war concurred in the Copenhagen expedition. I need mention two only. First, by the act or acts, which provoked the expedition, the party attacked had knowingly placed himself in a state of war. Let A stand for the Danish, B for the

British government. A had done that which he himself was fully aware would produce immediate hostilities on the part of B, the moment it came to the knowledge of the latter. The act itself was a waging of war against B on the part of A. B therefore was the party attacked : and common sense dictates, that to resist and baffle an aggression requires no proclamation to justify it. I perceive a dagger aimed at my back, in consequence of a warning given me, just time enough to prevent the blow, knock the assassin down, and disarm him : and he reproaches me with treachery, because forsooth I had not sent him a challenge ! Secondly, when the object which justifies and necessitates the war would be frustrated by the proclamation. For neither state nor individual can be presumed to have given either a formal or a tacit assent to any such modification of a positive right, as would suspend and virtually annul the right itself ;—the right of self-preservation, for instance. This second exception will often depend on the existence of the first, and must always receive additional strength and clearness from it. That both of these exceptions appertain to the case in question, is now notorious. But at the time I found it necessary to publish the following comment, which I now adapt to *The Friend*, as illustrative of the fundamental principle of public justice ; namely, that personal and national morality, ever one and the same, dictate the same measures under the same circumstances, and different measures only as far as the circumstances are different.

As my limits will not allow me to do more in the second, or ethical, section of *The Friend*, than to propose and develop my own system, without controverting the systems of others, I shall therefore devote the essay, which follows this postscript, to the consideration of the

question: How far is the moral nature of an action constituted by its individual circumstances?

It was once said to me, when the Copenhagen affair was in dispute, "You do not see the enormity, because it is an affair between state and state: conceive a similar case between man and man, and you would both see and abhor it." Now, I was neither defending nor attacking the measure itself. My arguments were confined to the grounds which had been taken both in the arraignment of that measure and in its defence, because I thought both equally untenable. I was not enough master of facts to form a decisive opinion on the enterprise, even for my own mind; but I had no hesitation in affirming, that the principles, on which it was defended in the legislature, appeared to me fitter objects of indignant reprobation than the act itself. This having been premised, I replied to the assertion above stated, by asserting the direct contrary: namely, that were a similar case conceived between man and man, the severest arraigners of the measure, would, on their grounds, find nothing to blame in it. How was I to prove this assertion? Clearly, by imagining some case between individuals living in the same relations toward each other, in which the several states of Europe exist or existed. My allegory, therefore, so far from being a disguise, was a necessary part of the main argument, a case in point, to prove the identity of the law of nations with the law of conscience. We have only to conceive individuals in the same relations as states, in order to learn that the rules emanating from international law, differ from those of private honesty, solely through the difference of the circumstances.

But why did I not avow the application of the principle to the seizure of the Danish fleet? Because I did

not possess sufficient evidence to prove to others, or even to decide for myself, that my principle was applicable to this particular act. In the case of Pamphilus and Lathrodænus, the prudence and necessity of the measure were certain; and, this taken for granted, I showed it perfect rightfulness. In the affair of Copenhagen, I had no doubt of our right to do as we did, the necessity supposed, or at least the extreme prudence of the measure; it being taken for granted that there existed a motive adequate to the action, and that the action was an adequate means of realizing the purpose.

But this I was not authorized to take for granted in the real, as I had been in the imaginary, case. I saw many reasons for the affirmative, and many for the negative. For the former, the certainty of a hostile design on the part of the Danes, the alarming state of Ireland, that vulnerable heel of the British Achilles, and the immense difference between military and naval superiority. Our naval power collectively might have defied that of the whole world; but it was widely scattered, and a combined operation from the Baltic, Holland, Brest, and Lisbon, might easily bring together a fleet double to that which we could have assembled against it during the short time that might be necessary to convey thirty or forty thousand men to Ireland. On the other hand, it seemed equally clear that Buonaparte needed sailors rather than ships; and that we took the ships and left him the Danish sailors, whose presence in the fleet at Antwerp turned the scale, perhaps, in favour of the worse than disastrous expedition to Walcheren.

But I repeat, that I had no concern with the measure itself; but only with the grounds or principles on which it had been attacked or defended. Those who attacked it declared that a right had been violated by us, and that

no motive could justify such violation, however imperious that motive might be. In opposition to such reasoners, I proved, that no such right existed, or is deducible either from international law or the law of private morality. Those again who defended the seizure of the Danish fleet, conceded that it was a violation of right; but affirmed, that such violation was justified by the urgency of the motive. It was asserted (as I have before noticed in the introduction to the subject) that national policy cannot in all cases be subordinated to the laws of morality; in other words, that a government may act with injustice, and yet remain blameless. To prove this assertion as groundless and unnecessary as it is tremendous, formed the chief object of the whole disquisition. I trust then, that my candid judges will rest satisfied that it is not only my profession and pretext, but my constant plan and actual intention, to establish principles; that I refer to particular facts for no other purpose than that of giving illustration and interest to those principles; and that to invent principles with a view to particular cases, whether with the motive of attacking or defending a transitory cabinet, is a baseness which will scarcely be attributed to The Friend by any one who understands the work, even though the suspicion should not have been precluded by a knowledge of the author.

END OF VOL. I.



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